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TREME
INTERNET MARKETING PROGRAM

WEEK 1

Beginner's Guide To Internet Marketing

WELCOME...

As I've mentioned before, this series of guides is perfect for both newbies and experienced marketers as it will not only introduce you to all of the basic principles of the industry but it will also walk you through higher-end, more complicated actions.

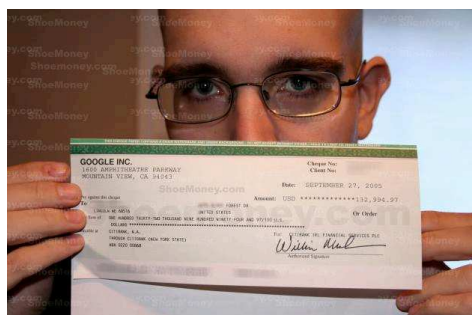
Before we begin, remember to keep an open mind throughout this adventure. Be ready and willing to learn anything and everything! From time to time, certain topics may sound or seem too complicated to understand at first. But I promise, all of these pieces of knowledge will eventually come together. If you absorb the information I'm giving to you, your overall success in the crazy world of Internet marketing will be dramatically improved.

Think of this guide as a collection of small puzzle pieces. As you read section by section, the pieces will begin to connect and by the end, you will have a clear, complete picture. Does that sound promising?

Good, then let's get started...

SO WHAT DO I KNOW?

I grew up as a kid who loved playing video games. And I still remember when my mom gave me my first computer. I loved playing around and figuring things out on the backend and one of my first jobs was at a hosting company. Sure, I loved computers and technology. But it wasn't until my college years that I got a little taste of success when I started making some cash on a video game website I created. What? I could make money doing what I loved? My success was short lived with the impending dot com crash, and I went back to working for the man.



In 2003, I still weighed about 420 pounds, smoked two packs of cigarettes a day and was tens of thousands of dollars in credit card debt. I thought that this was all I was supposed to get out of life and I was okay with that. It wasn't until I met my future wife that everything changed. She showed me what a real work ethic was and encouraged me to chase my dreams and head back to the world of Internet marketing. It was then that I developed a website that allowed people to pimp out their phones with wallpapers, graphics and

ringtones. The website became wildly popular and after a year, I started pulling in monthly checks for over \$130,000! Are you kidding? I am the same guy that had been fired from nearly every job I had

ever had and now I was making more in one month than I had ever made in a year. Over six years later, I've lost the weight, quit smoking and created a successful brand and series of businesses. I am proof that anyone can turn their passions into online success.

Whether you are a complete newbie who only knows how to turn on their computer or you are an expert programmer looking to turn your ideas into a successful online career, I'm here to tell you that it is completely possible to make enough money to quit your job and work for yourself.

WHAT TO EXPECT...

Depending upon your experience level, this first guide may seem pretty 'tame'. In fact, I would call it more of a preface. I'm simply going to tell you about the industry as a whole and give you a good grasp on the basics. But trust me! We're really going to ramp things up in the following 11 weeks. Over the next few months, we will closely examine everything from affiliate marketing and how to build your own site to methods of monetization and how to create your own products.

I will show you the things that have AND have not worked for me over the past years, and hopefully you will take my approaches and make them your own. Remember, you don't have to become an expert at everything to make it in this field. If one of the guides doesn't make much sense or really interest you, it will do you well to learn about it - but perhaps not to force yourself to become an expert in that field. Just realize that right now is a very exciting time. You're about to learn a lot and within three months, you'll be launching your own business! Now let's dive in!

DEFINE INTERNET MARKETING...

Internet marketing, also referred to as i-marketing, web marketing, online marketing, or eMarketing, is the marketing of products or services over the Internet.

The Internet has brought many unique benefits to marketing, one of which being lower costs for the distribution of information and media to a global audience. The interactive nature of Internet marketing, both in terms of providing instant response and eliciting responses make Internet marketing an industry where you can see fast results!

Internet marketing ties together creative and technical aspects of the Internet, including design, development, advertising, and sales. By reading this guide, you will become familiar with each of these Internet marketing facets and well on your way to launching a successful site.

WHAT IS AN INTERNET MARKETER?

Internet marketing is the business of both advertising and selling goods and services over the Internet. As an Internet marketer yourself, you will be responsible for bringing together potential customers with a service or company that will fit their needs through different Internet avenues. Whether the product being offered is a pair of sneakers or a new car, you are helping others connect with the products they are searching for.

With trillions of dollars spent online each year, it's clear that the Internet isn't going anywhere and more and more businesses and services will become primarily web-based. With a few clicks, you can often find exactly what you're looking for. The convenience and multitude of information provided by the Internet is incomparable. That's why you need to be a part of this industry and begin your Internet marketing career.

Every day millions of people hit the web to find products and information. And starting a business is no longer about location, location, location. Now – the world is your marketplace and everyone from a third grader to a millionaire is a potential customer or site visitor. Anywhere people can access the Internet, people can potentially visit your site. One day you could eventually have over 1 billion visitors. And there are no store hours. Day and night your product or service is available and you can

earn money while you sleep. If you're bringing the value people are looking for, you'll see the results!



The best part of starting an online business, however, is that the Internet is so powerful you can find a niche and grow rich. Do you love playing a particular video game? Or are you obsessed with the television show Lost (like me ☺)? If so – you can start a site based upon the things you love and tap the group of people who share your same interest. If you love it – there are chances that other

people have the same passion as you and that equals money.

At its core, being an Internet marketer means that your website(s) will provide people with information and products they are searching for. When visitors perform a predefined action, whether it's a click, entering their email, making a purchase or subscribing to your service, you will be paid!

ADVANTAGES TO INTERNET MARKETING...

The world of Internet marketing has an extremely low barrier to entry. Do you have a computer? Do you have Internet access? Do you have around \$100 to scoop up some domain names and get rolling? Do you have a million dollar idea and the time and passion to implement it? Great, then you're in!

Unlike traditional forms of advertising, such as a billboard in Times Square or a Super Bowl television ad, online marketing is much more affordable, targeted and able to be tracked. Using Twitter or email blasts to communicate with potential customers is cheaper than paying for that \$10,000 billboard that a fraction of your audience will see. Place an ad on Facebook and within the hour you may see hundreds or thousands of users flooding your site. With online advertising, you can see an instant return on your investment, track users statistics and actions, and communicate directly with those who are already actively seeking what you have to offer.



As you can see, the sky is really the limit for what the Internet has to offer both consumers and entrepreneurs like yourself.

The Future Of The Internet...

- Internet traffic is expected to double over the next five years
- 60% of this traffic will be made up of consumers (That's 340 million people!)
- Over 80% of consumers do *at least some* online shopping (Wow!)

So perhaps you are just getting into Internet marketing and learning more about the industry. Why should you choose to pursue a career online? Well here are some of the advantages to taking this path and committing yourself to my entire 12 Week Course.

The Advantages to Internet Marketing Include...

- A low barrier to entry
- Minimal start up costs and risks versus a brick and mortar store
- Cheap advertising options
- A worldwide marketplace 24 hours a day
- The ability to be your own boss and set your own hours
- The chance to make money promoting things you are passionate about
- And the opportunity to make a lot of cash along the way!

Although a career in Internet marketing sounds amazing, it's not without its own set of risks and investments. Internet marketing is not a get rich quick scheme. Much time, persistence and a *continued* willingness to learn are involved. You need to be honest with yourself before truly leaping into the field. Below I have listed some other facets of the industry you need to consider.

INTERNET MARKETING REALITIES...

As I just stated, there are good and bad sides to everything – including the Internet marketing industry. If you are serious about turning to the Internet to generate some serious cash, then it is vital for you to read the following section. I'm here to tell you the honest truth and perhaps dispel previous notions you had about the field. Are these statements True or False?

- **Becoming an Internet marketer is not a get rich quick scheme.**
 - True. Although many entrepreneurs have entered this lucrative market and become millionaires, when you compare the number who have had such wild success with all the businesses who have failed or never really taken off online, you will find that the "overnight" millionaires are not the norm. Nearly all of the business realities that apply to a brick and mortar store still apply to your virtual business – taxes, employees, customer service. Just as any other type of business venture, much of your success in Internet marketing will require a lot of hard work. I'm not trying to crush your dreams, but more than likely, you will **not** become a millionaire overnight. (In a year? Perhaps!)

- **Starting your Internet marketing career is free.**
 - False. Although beginning your Internet marketing business is cheaper than creating a brick and mortar start up, there are still costs associated with your endeavor, including website design, advertising costs, software, domains and hosting. With just a couple hundred dollars, you can get started. If you don't have the money to invest at this point, I suggest that you continue this course and save money along the way. The more serious you are – the more money you'll stash away. ☺
- **Most affiliate marketers never make a sale.**
 - True. Many people join affiliate marketing programs (we'll dive into this deeper in Week 2) and never turn a dime. I believe this fact is in direct correlation to the number of people who think enrolling in an affiliate program equals the ability to generate cash. With a great site, a decent amount of traffic and a solid foundation of knowledge, you'll be able to beat the odds. Taking the next 12 weeks seriously will definitely increase the likelihood that you won't be one of these people who never makes a sale.
- **Internet marketing is just a hobby.**
 - False. I won't deny the fact that there are a decent amount of people out there earning a nice passive income from their Internet marketing efforts. Maybe you are already one of those people! However, I believe if you refer to Internet marketing as simply a "hobby" and something you do "on the side", it will be difficult for you to truly take your income to the max. If you want to start a true business, service or website, there is a great chance that you may have to invest serious time fielding customer concerns, arranging advertising agreements and maintaining your site.
- **Websites are fail proof.**
 - False. When your site goes 'down' for technical reasons, you may become extremely frustrated trying to solve the problem and get your site back in working order. Not only that, but every second your site is unavailable to potential visitors means that you are losing money. Be prepared to cross the hurdles, ask others for help or advice to solve your problems and learn something from each experience.
- **Buying just one 'great system' will solve all my problems.**
 - False. There are TONS of eBooks, guides, systems and tools that promise you outrageous success online. This FREE 12 Week Course, however, is proof that you don't have to invest thousands of dollars buying these types of products and learning other people's 'systems' because there truly is quality free content available. I'm not downing all of the great informational products available as I'm sure some of them definitely are worth the investment. But as someone just starting out, it is more advantageous for you to learn through a course like this. No matter what you decide, you must take ACTION. It doesn't matter whether you buy 1 or 100 courses. If you never implement the information given to you – you will never make progress. But I'm sure you have more ambition than that - that's why you signed up for this course.

- **I can set up a “system”, let it run on autopilot and make money within hours.**
 - False. Are you kidding me? Technology changes overnight and the Internet marketing industry evolves at a rapid pace. Any ‘system’ promised to you as something you can simply put on autopilot and allow you to generate cash as you lay on the beach is a complete lie. Just because one marketing or traffic generation tactic has worked for you (or someone else) in the past doesn't mean it will work in the future. It's important for you to remain flexible and willing to learn new strategies, technologies and trends. If not, you'll be left in the dust by your competition. Warning: This industry isn't for people who like a simple routine and who can't stay on their toes.
- **There will be people against you.**
 - True. If you achieve real success, there will be people looking to take you down. Once you have people against you, you know you've really made it. ☺ There are tons of amazing people in the field, however, who can become great friends and business partners. Protect your brand, but don't take criticism or ‘haters’ too seriously.
- **Competition is fierce.**
 - True. You have to stand out to make an impact. Write some amazing articles and cause a stir! There is so much competition and people vying for the top spots in search engines and consumers' minds that if you're not working hard 24/7, you better believe someone else is out there doing it.
- **Making money online is easy! I can't wait to start spending the cash!**
 - False. If you are serious about truly building a long-term online business, then the first profits you generate should go right back into your service and advertising efforts. If you simply cash out, you'll never maximize your profits. More importantly, you must be aware of the taxation and current laws that affect the industry. It is worth your time to investigate the tax and legal advantages of creating an LLC or other type of corporation. Setting up something like an LLC is not a huge monetary investment, but it could really protect your personal assets and liabilities. Depending on your income and situation, creating an official organization could also prove to be wise in terms of tax savings. Contact a legal or financial professional who has experience dealing with other Internet marketing professionals like you. They will provide you with the best advice based upon your situation. This is probably one of the most important steps in truly creating a legitimate business and protecting your assets. This step should not be overlooked. (DISCLAIMER: I am in no way providing professional LEGAL or FINANCIAL advice. This is just information based on my personal experience.)

HOW DO I MARKET ONLINE?

So I've laid it all there for you - the good, the bad and the ugly. I've also explained to you the basic concept of Internet marketing. But if you're a newbie, there may be a chance you're saying to yourself, "Shoe, you still haven't told me what 'marketing' really means!" You're right. It's a pretty general phrase and it can often times be misused. But in terms of Internet marketing, it generally refers to any or all of the following online marketing methods:

- Article marketing
- Blog marketing
- E-mail marketing
- Search engine marketing (SEM)
- Pay per click ads (PPC)
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Banner ads
- Pop-up ads
- Mobile marketing
- Social media marketing

Over the next 12 weeks we will look closely at each of these methods. Understand now that each of these marketing methods are not created equal. Each approach will reach your targeted audience in a different way and each approach will produce a different result based upon your goal, marketing strategy and relationship with the user.

Whether you choose to market your own site or to become an affiliate marketer (marketing other companies' products and services and being paid for your performance which we will talk about next week), you will most likely utilize each of these marketing methods at various points. The great thing about Internet marketing is that what you earn is in direct proportion to the time and effort you invest in learning and developing your site.

A QUICK LOOK...

Article Writing - A great way to get the word out about your product or website is through article writing. By creating articles with valuable content, you will not only attract the attention of people searching for information about your particular product or field, but the search engines absolutely love seeing a variety of well-written, keyword optimized articles on your site. (This is where the ShoeMoney Tools Text Optimizer comes in handy – but we'll talk about that later. ☺)

Create articles that are accurate, truthful, helpful and specific and you will attract many more potential customers. Depending upon your budget, time, area of expertise and writing skills, you can either write your site's articles yourself or pay others to write them for you. There are plenty of talented article writers out there ready to help you create your content. (The Digital Point forums or sites like eLance.com are a great way to find people willing to work for you.)

Blog Marketing - A blog (a contraction of the term weblog) is a type of website usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary and descriptions of events. Think of it like a personal diary displayed on the web. Many bloggers are using video and images to increase their blog's dynamics. In terms of marketing, many people have opted to create and develop blogs where they focus on a particular industry or topic as to position themselves as an expert in the field. Blogs provide a great opportunity for you to do the same! And network with others in the space.

E-mail Marketing - E-mail marketing is an excellent way to reach out to people interested in what you have to offer. And building a solid database is important. With this you can reach out to your audience directly and almost instantly. It's a great way to build a relationship with your future, current and past customers.

Search Engine Marketing – Search Engine Marketing (also known as SEM) is the term used as you try to promote your website and its visibility by ranking higher in the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPS) through PAID means (that's what differentiates this from Search Engine Optimization). SEM includes Pay Per Click (PPC) and contextual advertising. The New York times defines SEM as “the practice of buying paid search listings.”

Pay Per Click Marketing – Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising can be found on search engines (like Google, Yahoo and MSN) as well as other sites such as blogs. Typically speaking, in PPC advertising, you only pay for the advertisement when your ad is clicked on by a user. The price you pay for that click (or the cost per click – CPC) will vary depending upon the competition in your field. The great thing about PPC advertising is that your marketing efforts can be extremely targeted as your ads are triggered only when a user searches for the keywords you have specified.

PPC advertisements are often referred to as sponsored links or ads and appear on the top or sides of the organic search results (the results that naturally rank well).

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – Search engine optimization (SEO) takes place when you try to improve the organic search engine rankings for a particular website. By creating search engine friendly content, optimized website tags and increasing the number of incoming links to your site, you are on your way to moving up the search engines. SEO is an art form of its own as it is important to understand the factors that search engines use to rank sites. For long term results, it is important to continually focus on the SEO of your site...because good search engine rankings equal FREE traffic. ☺ (We will really focus on SEO in an upcoming course – and I will also give you a behind the scenes look at my ShoeMoney SEO Tools.)

Banner Ads – You've seen banner ads everywhere! If you don't know by now, a banner ad is a graphic image used on websites to promote a product or service. Banner ads come in numerous sizes, but are often rectangles 460 pixels wide by 60 pixels high. Also 460 x 55 and 392 x 72 sizes are commonly used and more recently the 125 x 125 ad size has become popular for bloggers.

Pop Up Ads – I am positive that you have also viewed a good amount of pop up ads in the time you have spent online. Pop Up Ads are, of course, the advertisement windows that pop up after arriving at a site. They try to generate traffic or capture your email address. In recent years, this marketing tactic

has become less popular since many online users now utilize pop up blocker technology. However, windows inside the site are still a great option.

Mobile Marketing – By setting up a short code and having users register for your SMS text messages, you can communicate effectively with your audience. You can also optimize your website so that it appears correctly on mobile phone browsers.

Social Media Marketing – According to Wikipedia, social media marketing is an engagement with online communities to generate exposure, opportunity and sales. The number-one advantage is generating exposure for the business, followed by increasing traffic and building new business partnerships. Common social media marketing tools include Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube.

If you want to take advantage of all of the benefits that Internet marketing provides you and your business, you'll only be successful if you have the real secret sauce - TRAFFIC. If you don't attract users, you won't be able to tell them about the products on your site that may fulfill their needs. Most importantly, you have to spur them to take action (whether this means providing their email address or purchasing a product). More traffic equals more money - it's that simple. Even if you have the most beautiful website with all the functionality you could dream of, it does you AND consumers no good if they don't realize that you exist.

EXCITED YET?

Hopefully this course has given you some better insight into various aspects of the online marketing world. As we progress throughout the 12 weeks, your understanding of each of these areas will increase ten fold. You will understand the terminology used, how to best implement each tactic, and ultimately – how you can launch your own online business. 12 weeks and counting!

SHOEMONEY ACTION PLAN: WEEK 1

In order to be prepared for next week's course about Affiliate Marketing, it is highly recommended that you complete each of the action steps listed here.

- ☐ Analyze all of the pros and cons that I have listed in this guide and determine if this is truly an industry you are prepared to learn about and give 100% toward.
- ☐ Think of your top five passions, hobbies or topics that you know a lot about and would be interested in creating a site for. (Example: I love fishing.)
- ☐ List all of the information, services and features that you believe you could or would like to offer on each of your possible sites. (Example: I will make a site about fishing hotspots.)
- ☐ Come up with a list of at least 10 companies that are related to your site and would possibly be interested in advertising on your site. (Start thinking of where the money will come from.) (Example: Cabela's, Dick's Sporting Goods, etc.)
- ☐ Conduct research for each of your site ideas to see if others have already sufficiently filled the need in that space. (Do not give up if there are already others in the space. If you believe that you can do it better than them, then go forward with your idea.)
- ☐ Narrow down your five ideas to the one you believe could be the most successful. (This will be the idea you work on throughout the remainder of this course.)
- ☐ Create a name for your business.
- ☐ Create a brand new Gmail (Google email) account that you will use for your Internet marketing purposes only and will be associated with all of your Internet marketing accounts and purchases. (Keeping this separate from personal emails is a great step towards increasing your productivity right now.)
- ☐ Conduct research and speak with a financial and/or legal adviser in order to understand the tax and personal protection benefits of setting up an LLC or other formal organization. Then follow through with their recommendations which may include obtaining a Federal TAX ID number and proper business licenses (per your city and state). (LegalZoom is a great resource for setting up a simple LLC.)
- ☐ Organize a folder/binder where you will record and save all accounting information, including purchases and expenditures. (Per your financial adviser's advice, you may also determine that you should invest in personal accounting software such as QuickBooks.)

I know some of these actions may seem a little less exciting than just launching a site tomorrow morning. (Trust me – that is the exciting part!) But if you want to start your business correctly and protect yourself, then follow the steps here and get ready for **Week 2 - Affiliate Marketing 101**.



TREME
INTERNET MARKETING PROGRAM

WEEK 2

Affiliate Marketing 101:
Everything You Need To Know To Start
Promoting Products And
Become A Top Earning Affiliate

WELCOME...

Here we go! It's week two of my 12 week Internet marketing course. As I said before, last week was sort of a "diet" version. We started off simple and I introduced you to some basic concepts. But I also gave you a lot of homework – very important homework. Hopefully you were able to follow through with the action plan and square away the less glamorous, but critical pieces of your business (like speaking with an accountant, lawyer and perhaps creating an organization through a site like LegalZoom.) This will lay a solid foundation for your Internet marketing future. This week we will be looking more closely at affiliate marketing, including terminology, site ideas and methods for generating affiliate sales. Let's get started...

WHAT IS AFFILIATE MARKETING?

If you are just starting out in Internet marketing, I'm sure that you have heard of the term "affiliate marketing". There is a good chance that you have also heard that affiliate marketing is creating a new generation of Internet millionaires and you'd like to be part of the action. But you may be asking yourself, "What exactly is affiliate marketing?"

By definition, affiliate marketing is the Internet marketing practice in which a business rewards you (its affiliate) for each visitor or customer brought about by your marketing efforts.

Think of it like this – you are essentially the sales person for a company or product. When you produce the results a company is looking for (whether it is acquiring email addresses or making a sale), you will be paid accordingly.

So what sorts of companies have affiliate programs? Nearly every major brand and company has an affiliate marketing program that you can join. From personal services like dating sites and virtual products like eBooks to informational products like subscription sites and physical goods like shoes – affiliate marketing allows you to promote and sell a wide variety of goods.

Affiliate programs produce such great results for both merchants (companies who offer you commission) and publishers (people like you who are providing affiliate offers) that they are the most prominent marketing method found online and are not going anywhere soon.

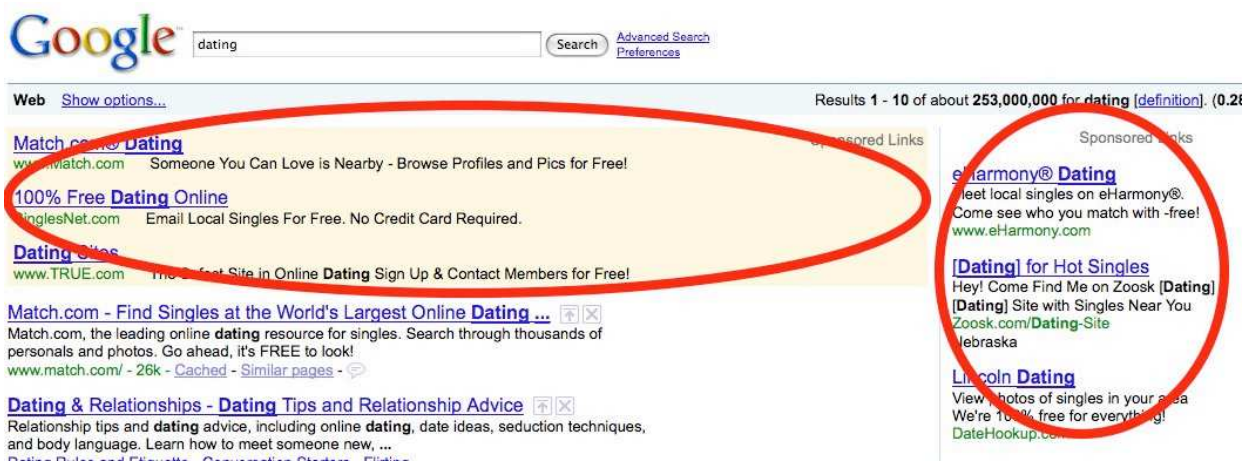


SPOT AN AFFILIATE SITE...

Even if you may be new to the concept of affiliate marketing, I can guarantee that you have visited an affiliate site! Affiliate sites can be found all over the Internet, including:

- Paid Search Results
- Organic Search Results

Paid search results are identified as the “Sponsored Results” regions on major search engines such as Yahoo, Google and MSN. Often times affiliates utilize paid searches to drive targeted traffic to their website. However, they must pay for each click their ad receives – whether or not that person purchases something from their site. Check out some examples of paid search results below.



Why would an affiliate promote an affiliate offer through paid listings? The affiliate takes this approach because they believe that the affiliate commissions they will earn will exceed the cost to run the advertisements. As an affiliate, it is your responsibility that you completely understand the terms of agreement set up by the merchants you promote. Some companies, for instance, do not allow you to drive traffic through paid listings by bidding on particular terms (often because they run their own direct pay per click campaigns).

Want to see an example of an affiliate site utilizing this method? Let's say you are interested in building a doghouse. You head to Google and search "how to build a doghouse". In the paid results you see an advertisement for the site www.doghouseplansonline.com.



Don's Doghouse Building Secrets

REVEALED

Plans and a video to build doghouses

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**Sign-up Now
and I will send
you a Mini-Series:**

**"The Most
Common
Mistakes People
Make When
Building a
Doghouse"**
(\$19.97 value)
Yours' FREE

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Please Send!

**"Discover how to "build your own doghouse" with my
dog house plans and save hundreds of dollars on a new
dog house...Even if you've never picked up a hammer in
your life!"**

I'll teach you how to build your perfect doghouse in
several sizes and styles, using my *step-by-step* dog house plans,
instructions, and Video, that anyone can follow. Discover why more and
more people are building their own dog house and how much fun it is!



Wow! This site looks great. It offers step-by-step plans for building a doghouse and an instructional video...just what we were looking for. The long sales letter, in depth product information and lack of other free information tips us off that this is an affiliate site. Let's say we decide to purchase this course. Guess what? This affiliate will get a slice of the action too and a nice payout. (In fact, informational products provide some of the best affiliate payouts available.) If the affiliate is paid \$20 for the sale and it only cost him \$.50 for our click – then he has just profited \$19.50. Remember, however, that paid advertising costs can quickly rise and not every visitor will convert into a sale. (Although I will focus in-depth on pay per click marketing in one of the upcoming guides, you can find some of my previous posts about PPC, like my \$10k PPC experiment, right here:

<http://tinyurl.com/nntb3>, <http://tinyurl.com/33tetf>.)

Although many affiliates generate instant traffic through paid advertising, other affiliates choose to focus on generating traffic the *free* way – through natural (or “organic”) SERPS (or “search engine results pages”). Although your traffic is free, rising in the search engine rankings takes a lot of work and dedication (that's where the ShoeMoney Tools come in).

Based upon factors such as your site's description, content and incoming links, the search engines try to determine which sites are most relevant to the user's search query.

Search for "dating blogs" and you will come upon tons of sites, just like www.onlinedatingnewsblog.com. Not only does this site provide you with "advice and tips for dating and relationships", but it also disguises some of its affiliate offers in its contents. For instance, look at the first blog entry in the picture below.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the "Online Dating News Blog". The header includes the site title, a description "Online Dating Blog - Advice and Tips for Dating & Relationships", and a navigation bar with "home" and "subscribe" links. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area features a blog post titled "New eHarmony Free Communication Weekend Begins" by Joe Tracy, dated May 22, 2009. The post text, which is circled in red, describes a free communication weekend from May 22 to May 25, where users can communicate with their matches for free. It includes a list of steps to participate: 1) Sign up for an account at eHarmony, 2) Communicate with matches until May 25, and 3) Use an eHarmony Promotion Code. The right sidebar contains a "Subscribe" button, a "Follow Us on Twitter" link, and a "Links of Interest" section with eHarmony and a cashback bonus offer.

The blog's author has informed the readers of an upcoming "Free Communication Weekend" offered by eHarmony. Readers who find this information useful may very well click on the author's affiliate link and register for an eHarmony subscription. Through the affiliate link and the cookies registered in the visitor's browser, eHarmony will be able to track where the new user has come from and which affiliate to give credit to. It's a win-win-win situation. The reader has found useful information. The company has acquired a qualified customer and the blog's author has been rewarded with a nice payout. ☺ So you have seen an affiliate site before, haven't you?

COMMON QUESTIONS...

They always say it, but there really is no such thing as a stupid question. And now that you know a little more about the general concept of affiliate marketing and the different ways that affiliate sites appear, there's a good chance a few questions have popped up.

Where will I store the products that I promote and sell?

You won't have to! 99% of the time, the merchants will handle the all of the products you are promoting including the product, shipping, billing and customer service. You are only responsible for driving quality traffic.

How much does it cost to promote products?

Zero. Nothing. Nada. Okay, well I wouldn't go that far. But signing up for an affiliate program is FREE. And you can easily start your affiliate business by investing in a domain through someone like GoDaddy (for about \$10). Domain hosting will cost another \$3 to \$10 per month. Plenty of free website templates exist so you should be able to get started right away. There are also a variety of free marketing methods that you can implement in the beginning. The more tasks you outsource, however, will increase your costs.

Are that many products available to promote?

Yes! In fact, many newbies have a hard time focusing on what to promote because there are so many options. Better yet, there are so many companies, products and niches to promote that you don't need to put all of your affiliate marketing eggs in one basket. Although I want you to focus on one site during this course, I advise you to create multiple websites over the course of time so you have plenty of revenue streams.

How am I credited for a sale?

After a user has clicked on one of your affiliate links, a "cookie" has been placed on your visitor's Internet browser. This helps merchants and affiliate companies track the sales you generate, and also gives you credit for a sale if a user returns to the site at a later time to make a purchase (usually within 30 days).

As an affiliate, how long do I get credit for referring people to a merchant?

This really varies offer to offer. Some merchants like Amazon.com only give you a credit if the purchase is made within 24 hours of clicking on your affiliate link. Other affiliate programs like eBay have cookies that do not expire for 120 days. This means if you refer someone to eBay that does a lot of commerce – you will get paid big time over the course of those 4 months. On average, however, most cookies are set to expire after 1 month.

Shoe, I hear the term 'scrubbing leads' all the time. What does it mean?

Well, "scrubbing leads" actually refers to the term "cleaning the leads." This takes place when an affiliate company or merchant does not count some of the leads you have generated from either international people or certain types of promotions.

Lead **shaving**, however, is the dark side of affiliate marketing and takes place when an affiliate network or merchant straight up steals from you. Where you will see it is when you run the exact same offer with the exact same payouts and one affiliate network consistently seems to pay you less. Fortunately the problem today is not nearly as bad as it once was, but it's still there since affiliate companies are becoming more transparent with their tracking tools and statistics.

INTRO TO AFFILIATE NETWORKS

So I've already mentioned affiliate companies and networks a few times, but how do they fit into the whole mix? Well, affiliate networks are the major companies responsible for bringing together and facilitating the relationships between merchants and publishers. Affiliate networks help merchants and brands develop affiliate programs, advertisements and payout pricing. After they've worked out a deal with the merchant, affiliate companies turn around and provide affiliates like yourself with offers you can promote. Affiliate networks also provide affiliates with support, tracking tools and they'll be responsible for sending you those big checks you hope to start earning!

Hundreds of affiliate networks exist and you may be tempted to sign up for the first one you see. But before doing so, evaluate these factors to determine if a particular affiliate network is for you.

- Policies – Are service, sales and payment terms easily understandable?
- Knowledge Base – Is there an FAQ area that will help answer affiliate questions you may have? Do they also have beginner's guides for affiliates?
- Affiliate Managers – Does the affiliate company have responsive affiliate managers and real people on the other end of the phone who will answer your questions and provide you with special offers?
- Social Proof – Have you heard people in other affiliate forums talking highly about particular companies? Or is this affiliate company not even on the map?

There are so many different types of programs out there that it can be quite overwhelming when it comes to choosing what is best for you. Also, as with most things in affiliate marketing there is no key formula for success. The best thing is to experiment with different ones and find which one converts best for you. Below are a few general rules that you should follow:

- If you have a very targeted audience, CPA (Cost Per Action) programs will probably work best for you. (Cost per action means that you will be paid every time you drive someone to perform the merchant's predefined goal action, whether that is entering an email address or purchasing a product.) Since you already have a known demographic to whom you are showing your site, it will be easy to find high conversion programs to complement your site theme.
- Sites with low traffic levels will have a hard time trying to earn money off of pay per impression or pay per click programs; these programs rely on high traffic levels. If you don't have high traffic, they won't be very successful.
- If you are just starting out, it is very difficult to find advertisers on your own. The best thing to do is to go thru an affiliate network that acts like a broker or liaison between you and the advertisers.

With a wide variety of affiliate companies each with their own unique specialty, you'll be sure to find a few companies you are quite comfortable with. However, here are some of the following affiliate

networks that I recommend for people who are just starting out, as they are some of the major players in the game. They are honest, reliable and have been around for a long time. They include:

First Tier Affiliate Networks:

- [Azoogles Ads](#)
- [Affiliate.com](#)
- [Commission Junction](#)
- [Neverblue Ads](#)
- [RocketProfit.com](#)

If you are rocking it in a niche like the mobile space or dating, then these networks will give you the best payouts. However, I have to warn you that some of these networks may be hard to get into. You have to have an established site. I also refer to them as first tier affiliate networks because they can give you the highest payouts in the industry.

Electronic Product Networks:

- [ClickBank](#)
- [ShareASale](#)

ClickBank and ShareASale are the places for electronic informational products. No matter what your niche, it's likely you will find a "how to" eBook that you can become an affiliate for and promote. They provide great opportunities for you to play the role of both merchant and affiliate. Is there a hot topic out there that you have knowledge about? Write about it and put it in their marketplace and watch as affiliates sell it for you.

NAVIGATING YOUR AFFILIATE ACCOUNT

Signing up for an affiliate account with these or any other reputable networks is pretty simple. Just head to their site and create a free account. Complete the required forms (should take only a minute) and submit the information. You will then be provided with your account information and you can begin promoting network offers.

As you navigate through the information and browse all of the offers available for you to promote, it's good to point out that you should not be fooled by higher payouts. You must also analyze click thru rates, click to lead conversion ratio (do most of the clicks turn into sales?) and most importantly, whether or not the ad's target audience is the same as that of your site.

The best advice I can give you is to run a small test on multiple offers. Then let the numbers speak for themselves. This can be frustrating if you're just starting out, but I will be offering you a variety of PPC Search Engine coupon codes in Week 4 of this course. That will provide you with a great opportunity to test various affiliate offers.

The bottom line is that the money will speak for itself. You can try anything and if it doesn't make the money as promised - switch back. Analytics are your friend and really there is no magic numbers.

Beyond testing however, my approach is to build organic traffic for a particular niche and test different affiliates. Then when I find something that works I will put a lot of PPC money behind it. This is not the popular way to do it though because a lot of people will not put in the time and effort that it takes to build a organic site that will stand the test of time (not spammed to crap) and they want overnight millions. It just isn't so.

After selecting the merchants you would like to promote, you will be able to access a choice of ads and link text. By copying a small piece of HTML code and placing it on your site, you will be able to have the ads up and running. (Tip - Make sure that the links you are using to promote a website contain your unique affiliate ID. If you are promoting eHarmony.com – you can't simply list eHarmony.com on your website and assume you'll receive credit. The links used must be your affiliate links.) If a visitor clicks on your ad, your affiliate cookie will be placed in their browser and you will be credited for any sales. Most affiliate networks will pay you on a monthly basis for the commissions you earn.

Don't forget that just because a particular brand or product is not visible in an affiliate network directory does not mean an affiliate program is not in place. You may have to look directly at a company's website or speak with others in forums to find out if a separate program is in place.

Once you have signed up for an affiliate account, you will also be assigned to an affiliate manager. For long-term success, it is important that you build a great relationship with your affiliate manager. Not only will they help you out when you have questions, but they also have the power to negotiate a higher commissions and payouts for you. They are your lifelines to private network offers not available to everyone.

As you continue to navigate your affiliate account, here are some of the following terms or information you may come upon:

\$/sale = How much you earn for each sale

Future \$ = If the product has recurring billing (for example, monthly memberships) what sort of money might you expect beyond the initial sale? If the product doesn't have recurring billing, this figure will be blank.

Total \$/sale = How much you earn for each sale when the initial sale and future income are added together. If the product doesn't have recurring billing this figure will be the same as the commission.

%/sale = What percentage of the sale price is your cut.

%refd = What percentage of the number of sales the site makes comes from affiliates.

Grav = Gravity. The more gravity a product has means the more affiliate are attracted to promoting the offer. Since this figure can be somewhat skewed, do not rely solely upon this number to determine which products to promote. You can, however, use it as a signal to yourself to see which offers people are making money from.

GET PAID...

In the world of affiliate marketing, there are four primary ways that affiliates can earn affiliate revenue and get paid for their results. Those four methods include:



- Pay Per Impression (CPM)
- Pay Per Click (PPC)
- Pay Per Lead/Call
- Pay Per Sale

Let's look at each of these revenue models more closely.

Pay Per Impression (CPM)

First of all, you may be asking yourself why the pay per impression model is often referred to as CPM. In fact, CPM actually stands for the phrase *Cost Per Mil*. In Roman times, mil means 1,000. Think of CPM as the amount of money a merchant is willing to pay you for every 1,000 impressions that their advertisement (text ad, banner image or other media) receives.

Wait, what's an impression? An impression is not a click. Instead, it is simply a page view. A single user could receive multiple ad impressions from the same ad. Although this revenue model was once subject to abuse and fraud, companies such as Google have developed methods and technology to combat abuse of the system and have since continued to utilize this model through content networks like Google AdSense.

Pay Per Click (PPC)

The *Pay Per Click* model is pretty straightforward and works exactly as it says – you get paid for each click an affiliate's advertisement receives. Whether the advertisement receives 10 impressions or 10 million impressions, you will only be paid for the actual number of clicks the ad receives.

Over the course of time, the PPC model has also faced abuse and click fraud. However, major search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN have revived the PPC model through their paid search results and the implementation of click fraud technology. When speaking about *Pay Per Click* marketing, another term you may often hear is CPC or *Cost Per Click*. This is the amount of money an advertiser is willing to pay for each click on their ad. The more competitive an industry, the higher the cost per click will be. (We will discuss this further in the upcoming PPC course!)

Pay Per Lead/Call

If you get choose to get paid per lead and call, the advertiser (merchant) pays the publisher site a flat \$x.xx amount in commission for phone calls received from potential customers in response to a specific ad. Recently developed call-tracking technology provides a bridge between online and offline advertising. Pay-Per-Call advertising is still in its infancy but many call tracking companies exist that can help you create affiliate offers through this method.

Pay Per Sale

Out of the methods I've talked about so far, the pay per sale model is the one you find used most often. Over 65% of all affiliate programs out there are based on a pay per sale model. They are only paying for *true* results – such as a product sale or email sign up as opposed to a simple banner click that does not provide a positive return for the company.

IMPLEMENTING AFFILIATE LINKS

Without using your unique affiliate links, you will never earn an affiliate commission. When it comes to implementing your affiliate links, there are some basic concepts and terminology you should understand.

Link cloaking takes place when you show search engine bots one thing and humans another. It's generally regarded as Black Hat SEO (black hat search engine optimization is a technique used to increase your search engine rankings in an unethical way) to link cloak. The reason people link cloak is because they believe the search engines have fingerprinted affiliate links and if the bots see them, it will hurt their organic rankings. And if they are doing PPC marketing, they believe it will hurt their quality score and thus raise their price per click.

The simplest way to link cloak is by using a UA (user agent). Search engine bots are **supposed** to identify themselves to your website and you can programmatically target them based on this UA string. Advanced link cloakers will target by IP Address. There are lists you can buy off the Internet of search engine IP blocks.

Link Masking, however, is making your link look like something it is not. The most common reason people mask links is to hide from humans the fact that their link is going to an affiliate offer. The deception actually happens in the status bar of the browser. When you hover over a link it shows in the status bar where the link is going. You can disguise this to say anything you want. For instance you could disguise a link that is going to a dating affiliate eHarmony offer to look like it's going directly to eHarmony.com. This is generally done through JavaScript.

URL Redirection is when you redirect a URL using a web service or a jumpscript. A lot of times in forums I see new affiliates talking about confusing the terms and meanings of URL redirection and link cloaking. For bloggers, there are Wordpress plugins like a simple link manager (\$29.95) that will handle this for you. And for more technically sound people, you can do this through PHP. Another big reason people use URL Redirection is because they are worried about their affiliate companies stealing their PPC keywords. I will be honest this is a good reason BUT using the above mentioned

methods will not shield your keywords if you are doing PPC campaigns and using these redirection scripts to the offers. Whoever is hosting the offer will see all of your keywords. The reason is because they are simple header location redirects and the browsers will carry over the referring URLs which contain all your keyword data (or whatever else refer string data there is).

Now that I've hopefully cleared up some of this terminology, let's talk about how it directly relates to your affiliate marketing goals.

Imagine the situation. You're a complete Internet newbie who's been searching away for some time, trying to find a viable way to earn money online. All of a sudden, this fantastic opportunity pops along (courtesy of you, the affiliate). You're about to click through to check out the product, when all of a sudden you see an affiliate link, something the stupid 'Internet 4 Idiots' book (or whatever they're calling their silly little franchise now) warned you NEVER to click on. The end user, or Internet newbie, having seen a blatant affiliate link, and now in the knowledge that there's a chance you're only promoting a product for it's excellent commissions is in serious doubt whether to buy or not.

Except the problem is bigger. If the newbies know, then chances are the more 'advanced' people up the Internet food chain will know too. In fact, everyone on the Internet who knows what an affiliate link is will immediately have second thoughts about your trustworthiness. The product could be world class, your pre-selling techniques could be so fantastically convincing, that Bill Gates would drop backwards off a Christmas tree on reading it. But at the end of the day, if they don't buy... if they have second thoughts... if they doubt your opinion and your integrity... then you will NEVER make a sale online.

Long 30-character affiliate URLs in themselves are quite naturally not the prettiest things in the world, either. If you can disguise your links by making them a simple short snippet such as...

<http://www.affiliatedefined.com/recommends/djk.html>

As opposed to...

<http://zimedia.dayjobkill.hop.clickbank.net/?tid=shoe123>

...then you'll find yourself in a better position when dropping links around forums and such, as well as when targeting a general audience, as your affiliate link will now be in the most part - hidden. The real advantage of using cloaked links though? It will actually save you money in the long run! All the nasty affiliate snipers out there (people who save money on purchases by switching your affiliate ID with their own) will be in the most part stumped. If they were desperate, even with a cloaked link, they could view your source code, but if you use fancy encryption techniques such as the ones at the heart of Ninja Link Cloaker (a product from Matt Haslem whom which I personally use), then you'll be covered by all manner of fancy MD5 code encryption and super-fast execution script implementation. Complicated stuff, eh?

I've explained to you the 'why' and shown you the 'where' (when promoting products), but the real bit that stumps most people is the plain and simple 'how'.

How can you create a cloaked affiliate link? How can you protect your earnings? How can you make a

link redirect? There are hundreds of options out there, but I'll narrow it down to my favorite, top-performing three.

- The TinyURL re-direct. Free, though less effective than the options to come, it has no server demands and is externally hosted on TinyURL.com.
- The PHP re-direct. Free and effective, though it requires your own server to upload said PHP file.
- The Ninja Cloaking method. Super-advanced, ninja-style, uber-sleek protection and cloaking.

TinyURL - It's free. It's quick. It perhaps doesn't give the world's best impression either, but all the same. It gets the job done nicely and there's not much more to say. You simply go to the [TinyURL](#) website, insert the affiliate link you would like changed and BAM! The link is done and live on the TinyURL server. Just point your links that way and re-direction is instant. You can start cloaking right away at TinyURL.com.

PHP Re-direction - This has obvious advantages over TinyURL. If you make a typo and have already published a TinyURL link on your blog, there's not much you can do in the way of changing where the TinyURL points. With PHP on your own server, you have full control over where your links go and what they do. A PHP re-direct isn't powerful, but it is effective and for a novice affiliate marketer I'd highly recommend it. You can learn how to create a PHP re-direct at the [About.com](#) website.

MaxBlogPress Ninja Affiliate - I prefer to use the MaxBlogPress Ninja Affiliate plugin for many reasons. The [MaxBlogPress Ninja Affiliate](#) plugin has the ability to turn any keyword in your blog into an affiliate link instantly. It also masks your links and provides professional looking redirects. There are plenty of other software options available, as well.

I use link-masking all the time in affiliate marketing... on my blog, in e-mail campaigns, on forums, everywhere. Without them I'd be losing a serious chunk of my online profits.

HOW TO PROMOTE AFFILIATE OFFERS...

So I've explained to you the general concepts of affiliate marketing and how to spot affiliate advertisements. I've encouraged you to sign up for various affiliate companies and you may have a great idea in your head about the types of products or companies you would like to promote. So how can you "promote" affiliate offers? Here are a few examples:

- Blogs & Forums
- Viral Products
- Craigslist
- Social Networks
- PPC Search Engines
- Your Website

Blogs & Forums

This is truly the low-hanging fruit in affiliate marketing. After you've decided upon a product you would like to promote, search for multiple blogs and forums related to the topic. Then incorporate an affiliate link in your signature, and begin participating. For best results, avoid spamming blogs and forums. Also, make your posts knowledgeable, helpful and related to the topic.

Viral Products

Remember the doghouse plans site we looked at in the beginning of the guide? Let's say you already know how to build a doghouse. Why don't you create your own free eBook on the subject and insert links to affiliate products inside? Perhaps you'll have links to a hardware store where they can buy a special tool to build the doghouse or perhaps a link to a pet products online warehouse.

After you've created this book, you can distribute it across the Internet – a great way to promote your site, provide content and earn affiliate revenues. The more value your book provides, the more likely it will be to spread.

Craigslist

Promote affiliate products through classifieds sites like Craigslist utilizing your affiliate link. (Be careful, however, as some merchants do not allow this advertising method.)

Social Networks

Utilize social networks like Facebook and Twitter to connect with people and promote your site. If you write a great post about a particular affiliate product, send out a tweet about it to all of your followers. If your article truly adds value, there is a good chance other people will send the message along and you could see some great affiliate commissions by the end of the day.

Another option would be to create a [Squidoo](#) lens. With Squidoo, you can create your first one page mini website about any topic you'd like (preferably ones with great affiliate products you have already chosen). You can make a great looking mini-site without knowing anything about programming. Squidoo lenses also do well in search engines so it's a great way for you to get your feet wet with affiliate marketing.

Pay Per Click Advertising

This method involves creating pay-per-click campaigns through search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN and promoting the merchant website directly through your affiliate link. As I said before, we will really dive into pay-per-click marketing in the fourth week of this course.

Your Website

And of course, one of the best ways to promote affiliate offers is on your very own website. You can do this through both banners and contextual advertisements. The less something appears to be an ad, the better results you will see. You can also build an opt-in newsletter for your site's visitors and utilize this email list as a way to provide them with quality information and perhaps an affiliate offer or two from time to time. Littering your site with banners that are unrelated to your target audience will result in low clicks and zero sales. Focus on building quality content at the core supplemented by affiliate offers and you will begin to rise in the search engines and increase your commissions.

AFFILIATE MARKETING REALITIES

You will begin to see a continual theme throughout this course. In every guide I deliver to you, I will lay the cold hard truth out there. (For anyone who has read my blog before – www.ShoeMoney.com) – you know I always take a very honest, matter-of-fact approach.) Once again, I'm here to tell you the honest truth and perhaps dispel previous notions you had about the field. True or False?

- **You can make a lot of money through affiliate marketing.**
 - True. Around the globe, affiliates earn billions of dollars each year. Some affiliates take home millions of dollars a year while others are happy pulling in \$50 a month.
- **This is a sales job with no door-to-door selling.**
 - True. Although you can promote your sites offline, you will only be credited through the sales that can be tracked online.
- **I will need to create my own product.**
 - False. At some point in your Internet marketing career, you may be inspired or encouraged to create your own product. However, developing your own product comes with its own list of risks and responsibilities, including customer service, packing, shipping and payment processing. An affiliate's job is simply to send prospective customers to a particular company or merchant – a less risky task.
- **I can put up a site, load it with banners and the cash will start rolling in.**
 - False. Polluting your site with tons of banners will not work. You'll lose that visitor forever. Instead you should stick to anywhere between one and three banners that convert well – a much better use of space than 20 ads thrown up on the site. You can also use a banner rotation system to maximize the number of different *relevant* advertisements being shown your site. Also, it is important that you plan out where your advertisements will go. Don't create a site and toss up the ads as an afterthought. Isn't this pretty important seeing as how this will be your means for making money? The contents of your site, however, should always be its main feature and focus.

- **Monitoring and analyzing your statistics can triple your profits.**
 - True. Not only should you monitor your site's affiliate links to make sure they are up to date, but you can also boost your conversion rate (your visitor-to-sales ratio) by subtly experimenting with your site's elements and analyzing the results. For instance, you could change the color of a button, the text in a headline or the placement of your links. After at least 1,000 different visitors have seen the change, and check to see whether your affiliate commissions have soared or slumped. If 1% of visitors converted into sales before, but now 3% of visitors convert – you've TRIPLED your profits.
- **I will have to spam people.**
 - False. There are people out there who develop and launch tons of spammy scams and emails. And unfortunately, they are able to sucker people from time to time. However, this is not a tactic you will need to utilize. Affiliate marketing is a legitimate business and you can earn great money with an honest, non-robotic approach. Instead, you can create opt-in newsletters where site visitors can choose to receive emails from you. A quality list of people who actually want your message have high conversion rates.
- **There are no magic overnight success formulas.**
 - True. There are successful people in any industry, on or offline – but 99% of the time their success is attributed to long hours, hard work, dedication and a commitment to learning. You need to put in the time to understand the basics, expand upon that and implement the tactics that I show you. You need to learn from your failures and successes and realize that there is no "system" you can purchase that will do the work for you.



AFFILIATE TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

AD = Advertisement, Text, Banner, Flash, Video, anything
ASP = Application Service Provider
CPA = Cost per Action
CPC = Cost per Click
CPL = Cost per Lead
CPM = Cost per (Mil) Impression (1000 Impressions)
CPS = Cost per Sale
CR = Conversion Rate
CSS = Cascading Style Sheets
CTR = Click through rate/Click-Through Ratio
DH = Direct Hit
DRM = Dynamic Rich Media (type of Ad, technology)
DRM = Digital Rights Management
EPC = Earnings per Click / Earnings per 100 Clicks
FAQ = Frequently Asked Questions
FFA = Free-For-All Link List
IM = Instant Messaging
MFA = Made For AdSense (Site)
OPM = Outsourced (Affiliate) Program Management
PFI = Pay For Inclusion
PFP = Pay For Performance
PPA = Pay per Action
PPC = Pay per Click
PPCSE = Pay Per Click Search Engine
PPI = Pay Per Impression
PPL = Pay Per Lead
PPS = Pay Per Sale
PV = Page View
ROI = Return on Investment
RON = Run Of Network
ROS = Run Of Site (Display Advertising)
SB = Small Business
SE = Search Engine
SEM = Search Engine Marketing
SEO = Search Engine Optimization
SEP = Search Engine Positioning
SERP = Search Engine Result Page
SID = common (optional) URL Parameter Affiliates can use for their own tracking purposes
SMO = Social Media Optimization
SSI = Server Side Include
USP = Unique Selling Proposition
UV = Unique Visitor

SHOEMONEY ACTION PLAN: WEEK 2

In order to be prepared for next week's course about market research and how to uncover hot, profitable niches, it is highly recommended that you complete each of the action steps listed here.

- ☐ Set a goal for how much money you would like to profit each month. (Be realistic, perhaps \$100.)
- ☐ Sign up for at least three affiliate networks (and associate it with your new email address). (A few of those affiliate sites may include [Azoogle Ads](#), [Affiliate.com](#), [ClickBank](#), [Commission Junction](#) and [ShareASale](#).)
- ☐ Set up a call with your affiliate manager. Discuss your affiliate goals/plans with them. Affiliate managers are there to help you and they are your best resource both now and in the future.
- ☐ Make a list of at least 10 affiliate offers that relate to the top niche/site you decided upon last week. If there are not many offers, move onto your second website choice.
- ☐ Select your first affiliate offer. Then use one of the link masking services I mentioned (like TinyURL.com) to turn your affiliate link into a new URL.
- ☐ After you find multiple forums in your niche, create an account and add your new affiliate link into your forum signature. Post 10 comments in various forums related to the product you are offering. Become familiar with tracking clicks and seeing the results you generate.
- ☐ Visit the [Squidoo.com](#) site and look at the other types of pages and mini affiliate sites people have developed. If you are up to the challenge, create a Squidoo lens filled with quality information sprinkled with your affiliate links.
- ☐ Surf some of your favorite websites with your new found affiliate spotting knowledge and see if you can spot the affiliate links in these sites that you never knew existed before.
- ☐ Finally, discover at least 3 forums/message boards in your particular niche and really try to get a vibe for what people are saying. Then, create a profile of your target audience. Age? Sex? Interests? Marital Status? Income? Who is your dream customer and how would they find out about your site? (This will be crucial for next week.)

Next week we will talk even more about market research, how to better understand your potential visitors and how to uncover profitable niches. Please follow all of the steps that I have listed here so you can be ready for ShoeMoney Xtreme Week 3: Market Research.



hoeMoney



TREME

INTERNET MARKETING PROGRAM

WEEK 3

Market Research:
How To Crush Your Competitors
And Discover Hot Niches

WELCOME...

Welcome to the third week of the ShoeMoney X Internet Marketing Course. Last week we learned about the field of affiliate marketing and I told you to sign up for multiple affiliate companies. I also suggested that you see if any affiliate programs exist for the type of industry or topic you are interested in starting a site for. Hopefully you were able to accomplish these tasks and are now ready to take the next step in laying the groundwork for your successful site.

This week we're going to dive into the topic of Market Research. When you hear the term "research", you may have visions of yourself sitting among stacks of library books until the wee hours of the morning trying to write a 'research' paper. Well, conducting market research for your online business is much different. Instead of researching past presidents or scientific studies, you are researching industries you are actually interested in. On top of that, 99% of your research is done from the convenience of your computer using a variety of tools that have already been created for you. Sounds pretty easy? Well, to make the most of your market research efforts, you will need to bring your creativity and analysis skills to the table. Ready to get started? Let's go!

WHAT IS MARKET RESEARCH?

Market research is the investigatory process that you must undergo before you launch any website or online venture. Market research can include steps such as gathering information about your competitors, examining market saturation and spotting trends before they peak. It is vital for you to put in the time to conduct market research if you expect to uncover hot niches and crush your competitors.

You may wonder where we will begin. Well, with an arsenal of research methods and powerful online tools (both free and paid), I will also show you how to look at both the online and offline worlds to discover what people want and truly define your niche. I will also show you how to reveal your competitors' tactics and how to analyze whether or not they are a real threat to your success. Finally, I will show you how to develop highly targeted keyword lists perfect for both your future SEO (search engine optimization) and PPC (pay-per-click) efforts.

WHY IS MARKET RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

There is a saying I often hear – "Find a niche, grow rich." This saying holds especially true to the Internet marketing industry. What exactly does this saying mean for us? It means that if we want



major success, we won't start a site about wristwatches. We'll start a site about neon, waterproof watches that tell you the temperature – now that's a niche. If someone is looking for exactly what your site offers, that is when you will find a loyal and profitable following. Narrowing down your online target market not only increases the success of your SEO and PPC efforts, but the number of major competitors in your niche will drop as well. (Although your market will shrink – these will also be more targeted visitors.)

After zeroing in on your niche, you will also be able to determine tightly knit keyword groups that will guide the creation of your site contents, advertising efforts and SEO efforts. Develop a strong list of keywords that attract visitors who open their pocketbooks, and you'll successfully be able to become a major player in the game.

Quality market research takes effort and persistence to acquire. However, without these key pieces of information, your online business has failed before it has even begun. Do you want to be successful? Then you must understand the power of keywords, marketing strategies such as search engine optimization and how to analyze various figures in order to achieve market domination. To sum it up, market research not only reassures you that the niche you are pursuing will be a worthwhile endeavor, but it also lays the foundation for your entire site's future path.

HOW TO FIND MY NICHE

As an Internet entrepreneur, you must choose which niches you want to focus on throughout your online career. Invest your time in the research phase of the development process and you will save yourself a lot of heartache and money further down the line.

Imagine if you conducted absolutely no research and instead decided to simply act on your instincts to develop a site about a hot product like the Nintendo Wii. You put in tons of time writing great articles about every type of Wii game and cheat code. Yes – you may receive some visitors, but outranking major brands for such a general phrase or topic like “Nintendo Wii” may be next to impossible (especially since there are already over 423 MILLION results when you search for that term). If you would have invested some time to conduct a little research, you may have discovered that “Nintendo DS games for girls” has a fraction of the competition and could easily become a great niche site that ranks very well. As you can see, it is better to invest the time now to determine what will create a profitable future for you before you blindly begin investing time, money, and effort into a site or service that is doomed from the start.



Now you may be saying, “ShoeMoney, what should I do now? I was going to start a site about NFL sports but that doesn’t sound like much of a niche anymore.” Well, let’s talk about the various ways to brainstorm a *niche* idea. Although you should already have something in mind (as I suggested at the beginning of this course), this is an excellent exercise to follow through with, as you will continuously create sites throughout your Internet marketing career and will surely need to spark a new idea. Let’s begin this process by answering some of these brainstorming questions.

- **What do you know?**
 - Begin by creating a list of all the topics you have a decent amount of knowledge in. (Come on, everybody is an expert at something!) Have you worked in a particular industry for a long time? What hobbies or pastimes do you have? At least for your first online project, selecting a niche you are knowledgeable in will make the project much

more fun, successful and enjoyable, especially since you will be responsible for creating content for your site including articles, email blasts and advertisements. You cannot fake authenticity, and if you are truly passionate and knowledgeable about whatever niche or topic you decide upon, this will be evident to your readers.

- **What are your interests?**

- Are there topics you may not be an expert in, but for which you have a definite interest? Think of topics that you would like to build an Internet business around and would be willing to learn more about. You will need to write multiple articles about the topic you select, so make sure it's something you will enjoy working on. This is the power of the Internet business - you have the power to choose the projects you work on and develop. "Work" will no longer feel like "work" if you follow your passions.

- **What niches can I find online?**

- Utilize the power of websites such as Amazon.com and eBay.com to look at the latest products that are top sellers. Yahoo Buzz and Google Trends also provide insight into the latest topics and products that are on the rise and what people are searching for right now. Other website directories, such as DMOZ.org, provide you with a list of websites broken down into categories. Checking out a site like this could give you great ideas for a niche site you could start. You can also visit a social site like Digg.com and try to spot any trends or topics that are really gaining attention.



- To find hot niches, you can also utilize Google's powerful Search-based keyword tool found here: <http://www.google.com/sktool/>. Simply head to the tool and select the link that says, "Or see top keywords across all categories."

A screenshot of a web form for Google's keyword tool. It has two input fields: the first is labeled 'Website' and contains 'example.com'; the second is labeled 'With words or phrases' and contains 'pots, pans'. Below the second field is a small tip: 'Tip: Use commas to separate terms or enter one per line.' Below the tip is a button labeled 'Find keywords'. At the bottom of the form, there is a link that says 'Or see top keywords across all categories', which is circled in red.

The left hand side of the page will have a list of categories of terms searched for on Google. You can see exactly what people are searching for and purchasing. Click on any of the categories that may interest you. You can then select any of the subcategories listed. On the right you will see a list of keywords in that category that are receiving a large amount of search queries each month. You will also see the amount people are paying to advertise for each of these keywords. The higher a suggested bid is, the higher the competition (and hopefully the more profitable the niche). Use your creativity and think of a niche site based on these results.

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Planner interface. On the left, under 'Categories for this search', a list of categories is shown, with 'Email & Messaging Software' highlighted. On the right, under 'Keyword ideas', a table lists various keywords with their monthly searches, competition level, and suggested bid.

Keyword	Monthly searches ↓	Competition	Sugg. bid
飞信2008下载	35,000		\$0.10
bulk email	15,000		\$5.64
smtp server	15,000		\$1.84
email marketing software	12,000		\$10.99
email extractor	10,000		\$0.42
psion	8,200		\$0.81
email server	8,200		\$4.03
email software	8,200		\$7.30
newsletter software	6,600		\$6.10
sms software	4,400		\$2.80
bulk email software	3,500		\$5.89

- **What niches can I discover offline?**
 - A great idea could be located at your local bookstore, say Barnes and Noble. Head to the shelves stacked with magazines and check out the covers. Do you see a pattern of trends and topics? Or does a certain product catch your eye? Also, take notice of the advertisements found in the magazines. What is being sold? Obviously, if a company is willing to pay a premium price to advertise in a major magazine, then they must also be seeing a positive, profitable return on their marketing investment or else they would not do it. This could be a great niche for you to enter, as well.
- **What is everyone else doing?**
 - Let's say you've come up with a list at this point, but you're still unsatisfied with the topics you've generated. If you ever feel brain drained, you can always log into one of your affiliate accounts and see what offers or topics other affiliates are promoting. Although, this might seem to go against what I've told you about creating your niche, you will at least be able to see what other affiliates are doing to be successful. And perhaps you can take these topics one step further and create your own take on the offer or topic. If certain affiliate offers are attracting a lot of affiliates, it's highly likely that this is because affiliates are making money from the offers.

Deciding which niche markets to pursue as you build your Internet marketing business should be a fun and exciting process. You are now part of an industry that will allow you to explore your passions and be as creative as you'd like to be. If you don't already have a list of possible sites, hopefully this exercise has given you a slew of ideas for which you can research. You must remind yourself throughout this process, however, that the first site you create may not end up being the best or the most profitable. If you are just starting out in the Internet marketing field, it's important to realize this first site may be more of a learning process. The most important part about this process is that you are taking action every week, learning more and pursuing your passions.

HOW SEO & PPC PLAY A ROLE

In a perfect world, you will select a profitable niche that will work well in both terms of search engine optimization (SEO) and pay per click (PPC) marketing (both topics which we will talk about more in the coming weeks). If you can make money through pay per click marketing means, then you will also do extremely well with great search engine optimization tactics. The opposite is not always true, however. Just because you do well in the search engines does not mean that your pay per click marketing methods will be profitable.



For instance, if the people seeking your site are searching for information they believe should be free (like a recipe), the main way you will be able to drive profits is from the advertising on your site (such as CPA offers or Google AdSense). If you were to run a pay per click campaign for this same site, the cost to get a visitor to your site may very well be more than the revenue that one visitor could bring your way. A negative ROI is never good.



Are you wondering if perhaps your site idea could fall into this same position? With a little research, you'll be able to find out. Head to Google.com and search for the topic you are interested in. Let's say that I wanted to start a site with cool drink recipes. Well, if you search for drink recipes, you will only see about one or two paid ads. Hmm... seems

like a situation where my visitors may be expecting something free and aren't really looking to spend any money. PPC may not be a successful tactic for this type of site although it appears to be a highly searched for term as there are over 45 million results.

There are multiple industries and topics in this same situation; one where there are high search volumes for related keywords but with limited PPC advertisements. This does not mean, however, that developing a site in one of these markets should be ruled out. Since most other marketers may see this as a red flag and never pursue the project means that with some SEO effort you can create a website that earns a nice passive income (although it may be smaller than a site that has the power to capitalize on both SEO and PPC efforts). What's the conclusion? Be aware that if you are creating a site where people expect your contents to be free, your niche lacks PPC advertisements and potential visitors are not in the purchasing mood, your site may not achieve maximum profits.

START YOUR RESEARCH

As you start your research, don't be afraid of a little competition. If there's competition in the area, then there is money to be made! And if you have the energy and willingness to put in the time, your site can be the most successful one out of them all. As an Internet marketer, it is your job to do some research before you enter the market. Various forms of market research that you may use, include:

- Search Volume Research
- Competition Research
- Traffic Research
- SEO Research
- Keyword Research
- Online Shopping Site Research
- Forum Research
- Offline Research



Search Volume Research

How can you ever expect to make money if there isn't a substantial market for the site or service you want to create? That's why it's important for you to research the search volume (or the number of monthly search queries) for your proposed niche. You want to make sure that a good number of people are searching for your topic!

One tool you can use to discover the search volume for you topic is the Google Keyword Tool: <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>. Simply type in the niche keyword or phrase that pertains to your site's topic. You will then see the word (along with a list of related keywords) and the monthly searches for that topic.

How would you like to generate keyword ideas?	Enter one keyword or phrase per line:
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)	soup
<input type="radio"/> Website content (e.g. www.example.com/product?id=74893)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use synonyms
	Filter my results
	<input type="button" value="Get keyword ideas"/>

Choose columns to display: ?				
Show/hide columns				
Keywords	Advertiser Competition ?	Local Search Volume: April ?	Global Monthly Search Volume ?	Match Type: ?
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ?				
soup	<div></div>	7,480,000	7,480,000	Add ?
chicken soup	<div></div>	1,000,000	823,000	Add ?
soup recipe	<div></div>	823,000	1,000,000	Add ?
the soup	<div></div>	673,000	550,000	Add ?

When reviewing these figures, here are some points to consider:

- Are there at least 5,000 monthly searches for the keyword or niche you are interested in penetrating? (That's a great guideline.)
- Is there money in this niche? (Look at the advertiser competition for that niche. Remember my example about recipes?)
- Are there a decent amount of PPC ads when I search for this term? (Do a shortage of ads show an unprofitable niche, or an untapped niche?)

If you can answer all of these questions positively, then I would encourage you to move on to the next phase of research – getting the scoop on the competition.

Competition Research

Before you enter any market, you must understand your surroundings and the competitiveness of that particular industry. With over 310 million results, a simple Google search will show you that entering a lucrative yet saturated market like the “mortgage” industry will be extremely difficult. You will be competing against *major* companies and brands like LendingTree and Countrywide who probably have thousands of links and an entire team dedicated to its site’s SEO. Deciding to enter the “mortgage loans in Nebraska” niche, however, shows you a much different landscape. With only local banks appearing at the top of the search engines and around 1 million results, we’ve just eliminated around 99.7% of the competition. Who and how many people you are competing against are the two most important factors to analyze at this point.



Let's see how much competition exists in the niche you are looking to dominate. Simply head to a search engine and enter your niche keyword phrase to see how many results appear. If there are less than 1 million results (500,000 is even better), the chances of you rising in the search engines are very good. Now you must take an honest look at who hold the tops spots. Are these major companies like Nike and Coca Cola? Or is it a series of blogs or informational sites you believe you have the power to contend with? Once you have determined a niche you believe has a fair, but not overwhelming, amount of competition – it is time to research those individual sites’ traffic.

(Although I reference Google at various points throughout this guide, please understand that other search engines like Yahoo! and the newly launched bing are also major players in the search engine game and responsible for driving plenty of traffic to any given site.)

Traffic Research

Now that you’ve nailed down your competition, let’s analyze their traffic. In order to compare the traffic of your top competitors, you can utilize services like Alexa.com, Compete.com, and Quantcast.com. By doing so, you will be able to see any big fluctuations of traffic, their average

number of visitors, and the amount of traffic you could expect to receive if you claimed one of the top search engine spots.

For instance, take a look at the traffic graph of ShoeMoney.com from Alexa.com.



It looks like the traffic declined for months and then suddenly spiked in January of this year to become one of the most visited sites on the Internet. However, the truth is ShoeMoney.com has had pretty much the same traffic for the last year.

Although these sites do not have perfect data, they do come in extremely handy when comparing your competitors side by side. For instance, let's compare ShoeMoney.com to Probloger.net and JohnChow.com.



As you can see, the traffic spikes are almost identical but with Probloger.net getting the most traffic. Let's take analyzing your competition one step further.

SEO Research

So we've got a general understanding of whom our competitors are and the type of traffic they receive. Let's take our analysis of the competition to the next level by looking at their SEO (search engine optimization) efforts. Although we will talk more in-depth about the search engine optimization process later on in the course, there is some initial SEO research you will need to conduct at this stage. We need to find out... Are your competitors at the top of the search engines on a fluke? Or have they implemented a great amount of SEO tactics?

In order for any site to rise in the search engines, it must meet certain "on and off screen" criteria – this includes keyword rich and focused content (the parts of the site you see) and targeted backend information such as incoming links and meta tags (the parts you don't see). Both the onscreen and behind the scenes factors I have just described play critical roles in a webpage's search engine rankings. We are going to use a variety of tools spy on our competitors and really see what tactics they are using. A few of the factors we will examine are:

- Title Tags
- Backlinks
- PR Rankings
- Domain Age

(NOTE: We will discuss these and other SEO elements more in-depth in the upcoming SEO guide.)

Title Tags

Title tag is another phrase for the title text used for your site. This is one of multiple SEO elements that search engines use to determine your rankings. This text is what is visible at the top of your browser, the text you click on in your search engine ranking, and the text that appears between the <title> tags in your site's HTML. If a particular keyword is used in a page's title text, they will probably rank somewhat better than a site without this. Want to see how many sites have the keyword for your niche in their title tag? Simply head to Google and in the search box enter the following line: allintitle:"yourkeyword". The results will then show you how many sites have that particular keyword in the title tag. If you receive less than 5,000 results, this is definitely a good sign. (Although more does not mean you should not include the keyword in yours.)

Backlinks

A "backlink" is another word for an incoming link. Basically, if I owned the site SouplsYummy.com and the Campbell's Soup website had a link to my site - that would be considered a backlink for me. The anchor text, or text used in the link to my site, is also important for the search engine rankings. To determine whether your competitors have plenty of backlinks or not and what anchor text they are using, you could use something like the [ShoeMoney Tools Backlink Analyzer](https://tools.shoemoney.com). (https://tools.shoemoney.com)

Backlink Analyzer

Start a New Backlink Analysis

 required

Domain*:

« Use main canonical domain. ie: www.shoemoney.com

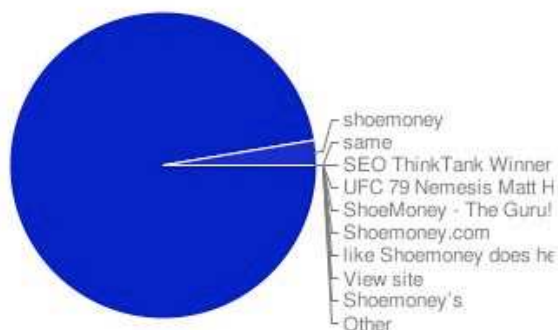
Run Backlink Analysis

Simply type in the competitor's domain you would like to research and then click the "Run Backlink Analysis" button. You will then receive a detailed report showing you who is linking to your competitor's site, the anchor text being used, and whether or not the links are reciprocal (one way links are the best).

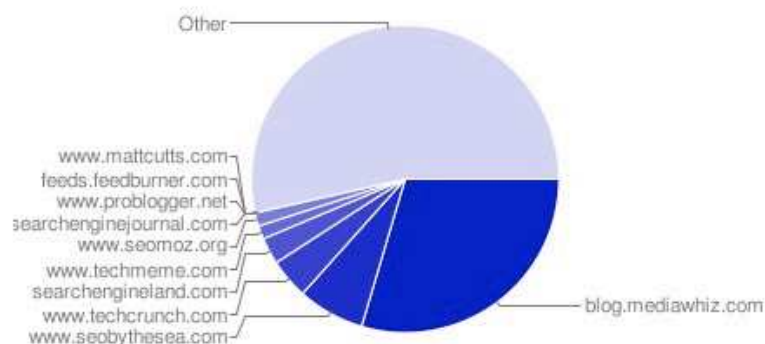
[www.shoemoney.com](#) Backlink Report

[Anchor Text](#) | [Domains](#) | [Per-Domain Analysis](#)

Top Anchor Text



Top Domains Backlinking

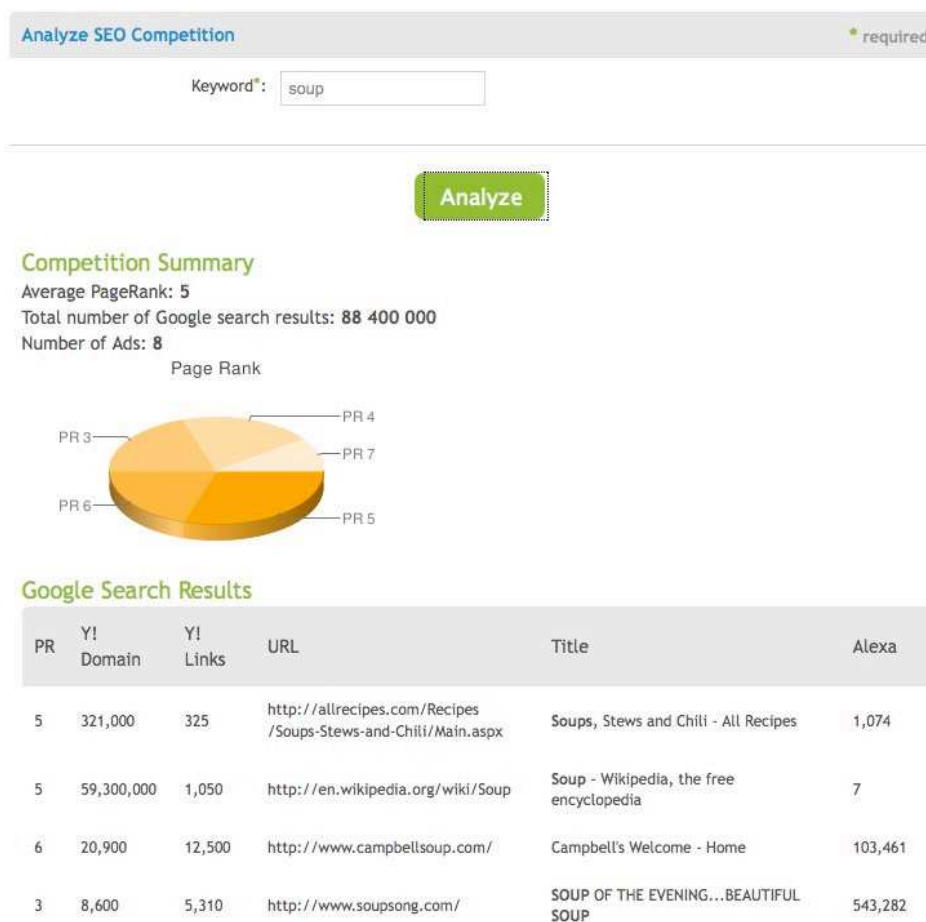


If a site already has thousands of backlinks, it's probably going to be very difficult for you to catch up to them. However, if the site only has 30 backlinks, not only could you duplicate their strategy by approaching those same sites and requesting a link, but you could also exceed the number of links they have. Generally speaking, more links = higher search engine rankings.

PageRank Value

You should not only analyze the number of backlinks coming into a site, but also the quality, or PR value, of competing sites. Every page (not website) on the web is provided with a PR ranking 1 through 10 (10 being the best). This rating number is not only determined by how many other web pages point to your page, but it is also an indication of those sites' importance. Simply put, giving sites a PR value is way for search engines like Google to rate your relevance to the search query. For instance, one link to your site from CNN.com is going to be much more valuable than a couple links from random blogs. If a site with a high PR number links to you, this will increase your PR power.

Let's say a small number of very popular pages (or pages with high PR) point to your page. The search engines will most likely consider your site more important than another site that has hundreds of less important inbound links. Look at this. If you use my SEO Competition tool, you simply type in the keyword you are searching for. In minutes, you will then receive Google's top ten search results along with the site's PR value, number of links, URL, title tag and Alexa traffic ranking.



Instantly, you can see the general SEO landscape for any given niche. If all the sites on the first page have a PR6 or greater, you may have a tough time passing them by. Also, if the links are coming from sites with a PR5 or greater, this adds to the competition.

Domain Age

Although it is completely possible for a new site to do well in the search engines, you should examine the age of the domains you are competing against. Are the domains you're battling old? Have they been around since 2000 or so? Older domains tend to do better in search engines as opposed to sites that were just registered yesterday. (As you can see, my SEO Tool tells you how old domains are, too.) This shouldn't be a huge factor in the decisions process, but one you do acknowledge when trying to nail down exactly which niche you would like to pursue and the SEO battles you may have in the future.

Keyword Research

So do you think you can crush your competitors? Are you ready to move forward? Well, when you create a site, you will need to focus on building solid keyword lists for both PPC and SEO purposes. In your search engine optimization efforts, you should never put all of your eggs in one basket and focus simply on a single keyword. Instead, focusing on very specific keywords and phrases can prove much more profitable than ranking well for one more general term with tons of competition. And for your PPC efforts, you will need multiple keyword groups so that you can create highly targeted campaigns. So how can you create large keyword lists packed with profitable words perfect for both PPC campaigns and search engines?

There are a variety of keyword tools available for you to begin building keyword lists:

- Google Keywords Suggestions
- Google Search Engine
- ShoeMoney Tools Keyword Generator
- Pay Per Click Campaigns

Google Keyword Suggestions

I've mentioned this tool before – the Google AdWords Keyword Tool – found here: <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>. Type in the term you would like keyword ideas for and then hit the “Get Keyword Ideas” button. You will then receive a large list of keywords relating to the word or phrase that you entered.

Move down the page and you will see a second section called “Additional keywords to consider”. Here are more phrases that you may want to think about adding to your keyword list.

Google Search Engine

Many keyword generators develop a list of keywords based of the root word you have entered, which means some great related phrases or words may be left out

Since these keyword tools usually use the words you enter as the base for their suggestions, you can often miss finding keywords that are related, but not based on the same word. For example, let's say you wanted to build a keyword list for shoes. You could head to Google and enter the term shoes with a tilde (~) in front of it - such as: ~shoes. The results will feature various related words in bold such as "Nike" and "footwear". This is quick and simple way to see if there are other terms or phrases you have left out of your keyword lists but could still prove to be very valuable.

ShoeMoney Tools Keyword Generator

A third way to generate keywords is by using a tool like the ShoeMoney Tools Keyword Generator. With this tool, you simply enter the keyword for which you would like to build a list around and hit the Generate Keywords button.

Keyword Generator

Type a niche keyword into the Keyword Generator and create a list of possible PPC keywords. (For a complete video tutorial and supporting documentation on how to best use the [Keyword Generator](#), please click here.)

Enter a Keyword:

Get More Keywords

The ShoeMoney Tools Keyword Generator scours all of the major search engines for the best related keywords and compiles an excellent, robust list within seconds. Edit the list as you see fit and you can save it to your ShoeMoney Tools account or export the data.

Generated 1180 Keywords (Adding Keywords to Database for "soup" ... Refresh in a Few Minutes for More Keywords)

state college pa soup delivery

soup making movie man teaches woman to make soup

weight watcher soup recipes

weight watchers drop soup diet

weight watchers french onion soup recipe

recipe for weight watchers soup

weight watcher 0 point soup

french onion soup weight watchers points

weight watchers tomato vegetable soup

weight watchers zero point soup recipe

weight watchers chicken tortilla soup

...

Save Keyword List

Enter a Name for this Keyword List:

Save Keyword List

If you aren't ready to sign up for the ShoeMoney Tools – no problem! There are multiple other free keyword tool generators available online. (Although I can't guarantee their accuracy. ☺)

Pay Per Click Campaigns

A fourth excellent way to build your SEO keyword list is through your PPC keyword list! Before you invest long hours optimizing your website for a particular keyword or phrase, I suggest you run a pay per click campaign utilizing a variety of keywords. Although this initial investment will cost you some money (as I mentioned, I will provide you with advertising vouchers in the upcoming guide), it will reassure you that you are optimizing your site for the best possible, profitable keywords. Look at the phrases that bring the best visitors to your site.

To make sure the your SEO tactics are then on track, utilize a tool like Google Analytics. This will allow you to see all of the keywords that people are searching for which bring them to your website. By analyzing this information, you may also come across a series of terms that you can add to your PPC campaigns - a true synergy between your two efforts.

Best of all, if your pay per click efforts are profitable, then your SEO efforts will make your site even more profitable since PPC has proven that certain keywords work for your site. Not only does ranking well in the search engines increase the amount of traffic to your site (nearly 3 out of 4 people will click on a natural search engine listing as opposed to a PPC advertisement), but it is also free and long term.

Online Shopping Sites

Now that we've looked at our competition and built a list of keywords, it's time to connect you're your audience! You can do this by seeing if there is a market for the things being advertised on your site. Put an item representative of what will be found on your site up for sale on a popular shopping site like Amazon or eBay. Track consumers' responses and how quickly someone was ready and willing to make the purchase.

You can also search for your niche on sites like these and see which products appear. Perhaps a particular product or author turns up in the results. You can then go on and see how many people search for these products in the search engines. Also, you could add these specific terms, brands or people to your keyword list and consider writing reviews of these products in the future. When people search for specific terms and phrases, they know what they are seeking out. And if you can provide this exact information for them, the sale will very likely be made.

Forum Research

I've mentioned this in the other guides, and will say it again - forums are a great place to feel the pulse of the people. By visiting various forums about your topic, you can see what people are discussing, the questions they are asking and other issues they may be having. By getting in touch with the problems they are having, you can create a site that provides them with the solution (that's really where you'll make your money!). The topics being discussed in the forums may also provide you with a great spark of inspiration for your site's articles, product reviews and perhaps new PPC or SEO keywords. After you zero in on some phrases and keywords often used throughout the forums, you can search for them online and see if there are relevant advertisements already running. Searching forums really

is a great way of getting to know your target market, what they are really interested in and where their pain is.

Offline Research

Phew! So you've made it through all of these research steps and it's official - you love your project idea. Guess what? The research still isn't over! Now it's time to go out and solicit some opinions from 'real people.' You should go out and get feedback from your family and friends, and not just your 'super-tech' friends. Ask your mom and dad, your grandparents, your kids, your neighbors, your grocer, your therapist---anyone and everyone! And be a listener. Don't just keep pitching the idea; don't get defensive and just keep trying to sell and persuade. Listening and then addressing the legitimate concerns will only make the project better.

Let me give you one real life example: When I started BelowABuck.com, a site that shows eBay items which have less than one hour left and are under a dollar, at first we imagined offering many features, from mobilized alerts to personalized accounts. But after doing our own research, we realized that what people really wanted was a simple service that would just show them the relevant items on eBay. By listening to the feedback of our potential and existing customers, we have devised a very successful business in BelowABuck.com.

As you ask for others' input, you'll see that the issues raised will be ones you've already thought of yourself and perhaps are still trying to work out. After collecting tons of feedback and recording your data, everyone on your team (if you aren't a one man show) should get together to share what they've heard and learned. It's time to figure out if there are any impossible hurdles that have reared their head. Once you've reviewed this feedback, finally come up with a plan of attack to make the tweaks to what your site will offer.

LISTEN TO PEOPLE & TAKE ACTION

Anyone who knows me knows that certain principles and standards guide my personal and professional life. One of the things I always say is that you must take action. You can talk and read and analyze and plan until you are blue in the face, but if you never take action, you will never achieve your goals. And this applies to my course as well. As we enter the fourth week of this 12 week course, I hope that you continue to follow through with every step of the weekly action plans I have been giving you. During this research process, it is my sincere goal for you to find a niche you are passionate about where you believe you can dominate your competitors. The other thing I always say about my company, ShoeMoney Media Group, is that we build services and sites that people want. Connect with your target market and listen to the people you survey. If you build it, they will come!

SHOEMONEY ACTION PLAN: WEEK 3

In order to be prepared for next week's course about pay per click marketing, it is highly recommended that you complete each of the action steps listed here.

- ☐ Follow the niche brainstorming exercises listed at the beginning of the guide (interests, hobbies, offline research, trend spotting).
- ☐ List out your best niche ideas and put them in order of which project ideas you like best.
- ☐ Head to <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> and analyze the number of searches for each of the keywords or niches you have listed.
- ☐ Head to any of the search engines and search for your keyword to see how many competitors exist in the respective niche.
- ☐ Research the amount of traffic competing sites in your niche are often receiving.
- ☐ Research your competition to see what SEO strategies they are using (including backlinks, meta tags and keywords).
- ☐ Utilizing various keyword generator tools, develop a solid keyword list for your PPC efforts.
- ☐ Now create a second solid, more refined keyword list for your SEO efforts.
- ☐ Visit online shopping sites and see which specific terms are being used and whether products in your niche are selling quickly
- ☐ Find forums about your niche and write down two or three issues people are speaking about in the forums and the solutions that you could provide them through your site.
- ☐ After you have decided upon the niche you believe provides the most opportunity, conduct some offline research by asking *at least* 5 friends and family what they think of your site idea and if it solves any problems for them. Take their recommendations seriously and do not become defensive.
- ☐ Finally, after all your research - decide upon the niche and site concept you are going to follow through with for the remainder of this course. High demand and fewer competitors mean that you will make more money.

SHOEMONEY BONUS: If you are interested in using the ShoeMoney Tools at any point during this course, head to <https://tools.shoemoney.com> and use the promo code XCOURSE. You will receive a 14-day trial for only \$1.95. (You can cancel anytime!)



hoeMoney



TREME

INTERNET MARKETING PROGRAM

WEEK 4

Part 1:

Introduction To Pay-Per-Click Marketing

WELCOME...

As you remember, last week we talked about the concept of Market Research and the importance of understanding who your competitors are, the tactics they are implementing and how you can utilize this information to gain market share. Now, in the first week of this two part Pay-Per-Click marketing series, we will not only learn more about the basic concept of pay-per-click marketing, but how you can use the information and keyword lists you gathered last week to create competitive and profitable PPC campaigns. Are you ready to begin learning more about this Internet marketing phenomenon you have heard so much about? Good! Then let's get started with the ShoeMoney X Course's Part 1: Introduction To Pay-Per-Click Marketing.

WHAT IS PAY-PER-CLICK MARKETING?

Started in 2002, pay-per-click marketing is a form of Internet advertising where marketers display their ads across search engine result pages and websites related to their advertisements. As the term "pay-per-click" implies, advertisers only pay when a user clicks on the advertisement and the cost of each click depends on the amount the advertiser (which is you) has agreed to pay.

In most instances, a pay-per-click ad appears as a four-line ad that includes a headline (50 character maximum), two short lines of descriptive ad copy (200 character maximum) and the advertiser's URL. Although PPC ads are fairly basic (lacking flashy graphics, music, or colors), they are extremely effective since they offer some of the most targeted advertising options available.

Unlike traditional forms of media such as a television commercial or newspaper advertisement which is shown to a random sampling of people, your pay-per-click advertisement is only displayed to those users who are actively searching for what you have to offer. This means that pay-per-click advertising proves to be a marketing option that provides a bigger bang for your buck. Better yet, PPC advertising generally costs less than a dollar per click while something like a billboard can run you thousands. With a couple hundred dollars, you can easily enter the advertising market and become a major competitor.

Generally speaking, the PPC marketing process follows these steps:

1. Create an advertiser account with your preferred search engine
2. Verify billing information and deposit funds
3. Conduct research and develop a keyword list (these keywords will trigger your ads)
4. Specify your bid amount (or the amount you are willing to pay per click)
5. Develop creative ad copy
6. Create a "landing page" for your advertisements
7. Activate the ads and begin your PPC campaign

PAY-PER-CLICK ENGINES & EXAMPLES

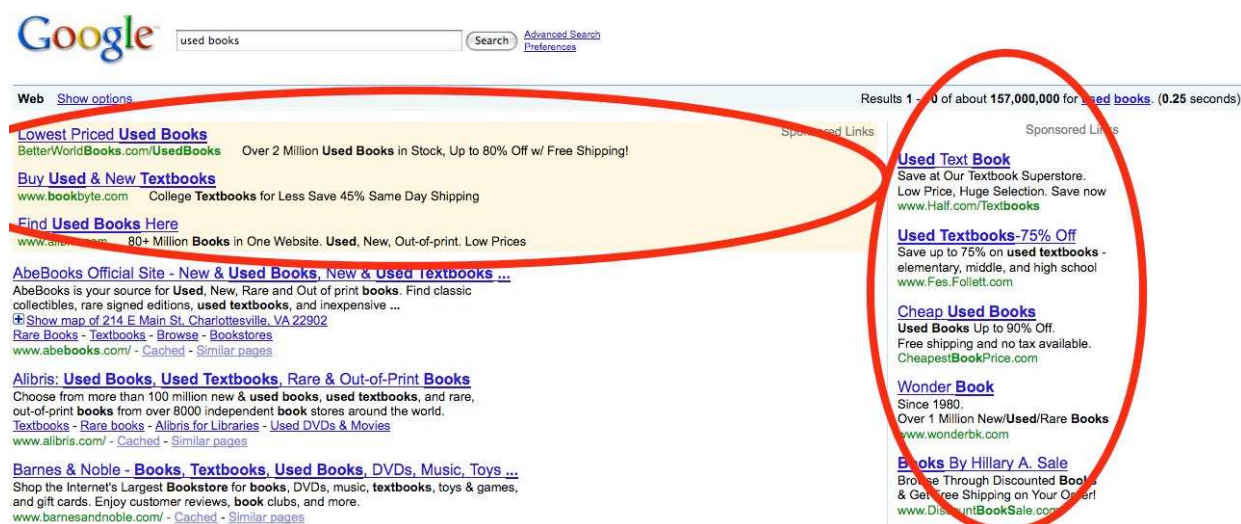
Today, there are a variety of pay-per-click search engines for which you can display your PPC advertisements. Major players in the game include search engines such as Google, Yahoo and MSN. Although you will begin working with only one of these search engines, once you taste success you

will eventually utilize other ones. At that time, you will be able to see the different results each one provides and which engines work best for each niche or topic you advertise. Some people see better conversions from one engine while other engines may provide advertisers with a lower cost per click.

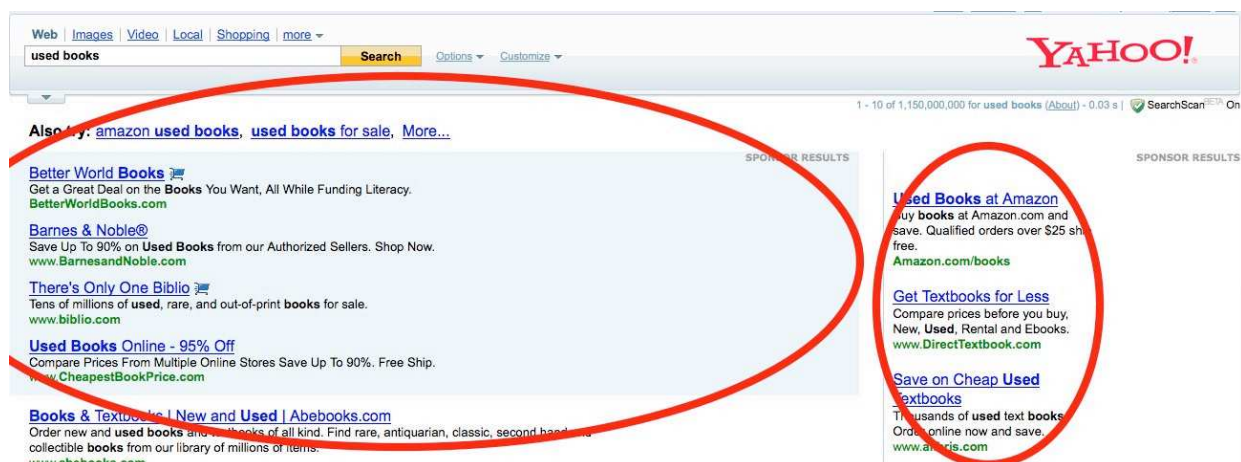
Since Google is the most popular PPC search engine, I will be using examples of their AdWords advertising program throughout the guide. Even if you decide to utilize a different search engine, all of the topics and concepts I speak about will apply to any PPC campaign you begin – despite the search engine.

As I mentioned, the most common form of PPC advertising appears in the form of text ads located on search engine result pages. The ads are triggered based upon the keywords users are searching for. For instance, if you were advertising “used books” and someone searched for that phrase, your ad would appear.

Take a quick look at this example of PPC advertisements on the Google search engine:



And here is another example of Yahoo PPC ads:



As you can see, the advertisements are not identical, as some of the competitors are not using both of the search engines in the same manner. This means more opportunity for you.

Although this type of ad is the most common form of PPC advertising, a second type of ads also exists. These ads are referred to as “content ads” as they are displayed on related websites and blogs that are part of the “content network”. Although these ads are not triggered based on the keywords a user enters, they are based on the keywords associated with a site.

Content ads can appear in two different forms. The first is a text advertisement nearly identical to the type that appears on the search engine results pages. Here’s an example below:

The screenshot shows the eHow website with the article "How to write a good poem!". A red circle highlights a sidebar on the left containing several text-based advertisements:

- Technical Writing Tools**: Technical Communicators Resource. TCS 2 Includes FrameMaker, RoboHelp. www.Adobe.com
- Publish Your Poems**: Turn Your Poems Into a Book. Keep Your Rights. Request a Free Guide. AuthorHouse.com/Poems
- Self-Publish Your Poetry**: See your book's vision come to life in print through BookSurge. www.BookSurge.com
- Poem For Children**: Find more sources/options for what your looking for www.webcrawler.com
- Come Back To Stratford**: See Macbeth, West Side Story & More 3 Tickets Only \$199! Order Now. StratfordFestival.ca/BoxPass

Below the circle, the main article content is visible, including a "From Quick Guide: Bring Out Your Inner Poet" section and a "How to Teach Poetry Writing to a Child" article.

The second type of content ad is much more creative – they are image ads. This includes creative and flashy banner ads. Take a look at a sample of this second type of content ad:

The screenshot shows the CarBlog website. A red circle highlights a banner advertisement for Progressive car insurance. The banner features a woman's face and the text "Car insurance with lots of extra features that won't cost you extra." Below the banner, the website's navigation bar and main content area are visible. A red arrow points to the banner with the text "Content Network Ad".

Below the banner, the website's navigation bar includes links: Home, Concept Cars, Super Cars, Car videos, Car News, Car of the Week, Event Coverage. The main content area features a "CARBlog THE AUTOMOTIVE NEWS BLOG" header, a "Buy Car" section, a "New Honda Insight Hybrid" section, and a "VW Golf GTD, the New Monster" section. A "Content Network Ad" label is placed over the main content area.

Now that you can identify the different types of PPC ads that exist, let's see whether or not this form of advertising is a good fit for your business.

IS PAY-PER-CLICK RIGHT FOR ME?

Pay-per-click advertising is a great way to drive traffic and if done right, you should also be able to drive some great profits as well. And although it is a major part of the Internet marketing industry (in fact, some very successful people focus only on PPC efforts), your business may fall into a category where pay-per-click marketing is not right for you. Or perhaps you find you don't have the funds or patience to master the art of pay-per-click. No matter what your situation, here are some factors that you should consider about PPC...

- **Pay-per-click gives you the opportunity to appear on the first page of search results.**
 - Did you know that most users don't click past the third page of organic results? Whether you are waiting to see the results of your SEO efforts or you are promoting a short term affiliate offer, utilizing PPC advertising is a great way to appear on the front page of the search engine results. As more and more users become accustomed to making online purchases and ecommerce continues to soar, it is more important than ever to make sure that you get in front of the eyes of your target market and potential consumers. For those who are willing to pay, PPC provides a great option for doing so.
- **Pay-per-click advertising programs continue to become more user-friendly.**
 - Advertising programs are becoming much easier to understand and effectively utilize. Complete newbies can set up their first PPC campaign within minutes. Features such as automated smart bidding and conversion tracking software have become the standard. As advertisers learn more, they are also able to use more advanced features and options to truly optimize their campaigns.
- **Pay-per-click requires you to invest time everyday updating your accounts and optimizing your campaigns.**
 - Do you have attention to detail? With your PPC campaigns, you must be committed to continuously updating and monitoring your account and ad performance. Although this process will take less time as you become more experienced, this must be done unless you are willing to blow your money. 😊
- **Pay-per-click is for people with *at least* \$100 to invest (and perhaps lose) in their first campaign.**
 - Let's be realistic. The chance of your first few PPC campaigns being a complete success is not very likely. (Although not impossible!) You must be willing to spend a couple hundred dollars in your first few months and expect a minimal return. This is part of the learning process. Furthermore, if you do profit from any of your campaigns in the

beginning, you will want to reinvest this money back into your PPC efforts so you can grow your profits exponentially.

- **Pay-per-click marketing requires analytical thinking including the analysis of statistics and data.**
 - Clicks aren't free. If you are serious about making a profit through PPC, you must analyze the results that each keyword and advertisement in your campaign produces. Does certain ad copy get a lot of clicks but zero conversions (or sales)? Do other keyword phrases prove to be much more profitable? It's all about analyzing these aspects of your campaign, weeding out the weak parts, and pouring money into the aspects that give you a positive ROI. I always say that companies and marketers have a blank check for anything that provides them with a positive return – and that should be your motto as well.



Now that you understand some of the basic characteristics and duties of a successful pay-per-click marketer, do you believe you are cut out to do the job? If so, let's move on!

THE TRUTH ABOUT PAY-PER-CLICK

Many people have misconceptions, unreal expectations and even fears about the pay-per-click industry. Some people believe you can turn a profit overnight. On the other hand, others believe that PPC may be too saturated or expensive for them to enter the market. Well, in true ShoeMoney fashion, once again I am here to reveal the truths of pay per click marketing. Can you answer these questions correctly? True or False?

- **I need to be a genius to run a PPC campaign.**
 - False. If you have the ability to write creative ad copy, the money to invest in your first couple campaigns and the skills to analyze your results – then you can definitely create a profitable PPC campaign. Sound like something you can handle?
- **I should ask friends and marketing professionals what search engines to use.**
 - True. Although Google is the most popular PPC search engine, it is also one of the most competitive. There are plenty of search engines and sources of traffic for your site. By asking others who have experience with PPC marketing about their results with various search engines, you will learn which ones may prove to be the best for you and your niche. If you're a complete newbie and still unsure of the choice you should make, then Google AdWords is a great place to begin. As with Internet marketing as a whole, PPC gives you plenty of freedom. Choose any search engine you like and bid on any keyword you want!

- **I will get charged only when someone clicks on my link and makes a purchase.**
 - False. Okay, I know this is probably given, but I just want to make sure that this is very clear. You will pay for every click your ad receives. If 100 people click on your ad and no one buys, you will still pay for those 100 clicks. The only instance when you will be credited for clicks is if you're a victim of click fraud. In most cases, click fraud takes place when a single IP address "clicks" on your ad hundreds or even thousands of times, driving up your PPC costs and leaving you with no positive results. If at anytime you believe click fraud is occurring with your account, alert your PPC search engine immediately and they will look into the issue.

- **PPC will allow me to see instant results and an influx of traffic.**

- True. Unlike search engine optimization, your PPC efforts can produce results almost immediately. Rather than waiting months for your site to climb the search engines, you can begin a campaign and see an influx of traffic within a couple hours. Of course, we all love to see more people visiting our sites and soaring traffic numbers may make you really happy at first. But you must remember that each of these visitors cost you cold hard cash, and if they aren't producing a positive ROI for you – it may be time to pause the campaign.



- **I've come up with the keywords I want to bid on, have my budget set, and know which PPC search engine I want to use. Now I should start my campaign.**
 - False. Wait! You've missed a major step in this process. Have you analyzed your "landing page" (or the page visitors will arrive at once they click your ad)? If your landing page is not relevant to your ad, not only will you pay more for your click but your visitor will most likely hit the back button. And boom! You've just lost money and a potential customer. Instead, build a landing page that sells, sells, sells. This page should reiterate what your advertisement offered, the product or service at hand, testimonials, a clear call to action, and a simple purchase process. The more complete information you provide and the less clicks you require from the user, the better your results.
- **I can change my bid amount on a keyword and see the change almost immediately.**
 - True. At any time, you can alter the amount you are willing to pay for a keyword and within minutes you should be able to see the change. Because PPC search engines work in real-time with auto bidding software, you can rest assured that your bids will be managed properly. If this is ever not the case, contact your PPC search engine to see if there is a temporary issue.

- **I want to stay on the first page for one of my keywords. I should increase my bid to the amount necessary to remain on the page.**
 - False. Getting involved in a bidding war is one of the worst mistakes a pay-per-click marketer, new or seasoned, can make. This is your money we're talking about. If you are competing against a big company, rest assured they will win the war and you may very well blow your budget. Unless your ROI is in direct proportion to your ads ranking, bidding too high will just result in a loss of your profits. It is a much wiser decision to allocate your PPC marketing dollars in a manner that takes advantage of multiple, less popular, less costly yet still highly effective keywords.
- **Once I get a great campaign going, I can just let it run on autopilot for months on end.**
 - False. In the Internet marketing industry, you can never let something "run on autopilot" for very long. Things change too rapidly and you better believe there is always a competitor on your heels trying to out-game you. In the long run, a single PPC campaign may be difficult to handle because PPC costs can mount over time if you do not continue to optimize the campaign.
- **Doing well in PPC will help improve my organic search rankings.**
 - False. The results you achieve in your PPC efforts have nothing to do with the SEO results for your site. Although your PPC campaigns may provide you with insights into the keyword phrases that are most profitable for your site and for which you may wish to rank organically, PPC cannot directly affect your site's search engine position. The best method for success would be to utilize both the power of the SEO and PPC simultaneously. PPC can bring you great traffic if your SEO results are not where you want them to be at the time. But if you do not optimize your site for the search engines in the long run, you will be stuck between a rock and a hard place. If you quit your PPC efforts, your traffic will evaporate. But if you continue with PPC, your costs will be never ending.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF PPC?



Speaking of costs, what can you honestly expect to shell out on your PPC efforts? As I mentioned, I recommend that you allocate at least \$100 to begin your first PPC campaign. In all honesty, however, PPC will cost you as much as you have to spend. ☺ If you know that for every \$1.00 you spend your return is \$1.50 – why won't you write a blank check?

Although PPC can become expensive, there are also ways for which you can control your costs:

- **Produce high quality ads.** High quality advertisements and landing pages are rewarded with lower advertising costs. This preserves the integrity of the ad network and saves you money if you are an advertiser that brings value to their network and to users.

- **Bid wisely on keywords.** Depending on the niche you enter, the keywords you are bidding on may range anywhere in cost from \$.05 to \$50. Yikes! Is it possible you could blow your budget in two clicks? Probably not. In most instances, the bidding does not get that high and I wouldn't recommend you to enter a niche like that at this point. To control your spending, the advertising programs will allow you to select the maximum amount you are willing to pay for each click. You will never pay more than the amount you have specified.
- **Define a daily budget you are comfortable with.** You can also control costs by defining the amount of money you are willing to spend on a daily basis – this could be as little as \$5. Remember that the lower your daily budget, the fewer clicks you will receive. Never set your daily budget above a point you are comfortable with, however.

Although there are other fixed costs associated with PPC (domain names, hosting, and other tracking/research tools), there is no clear-cut answer to this question. Your PPC costs will vary depending on your initial budget, the niche you enter and the ways in which you optimize your campaign. So how exactly can you monetize your PPC efforts? Let's take a look.

HOW TO MONETIZE YOUR PPC EFFORTS

In pay-per-click marketing, there are two primary ways that you can make money.

1. Creating your own landing page and offer.
2. Directly linking to a merchant's website.

Create Your Own Landing Page

When creating a PPC campaign, you may choose to send visitors directly to your website. This means when they click on your ad, they will arrive at the "landing page" you have specified. This method of PPC marketing is preferred because you are given so much control over the sales process. On this landing page, you can use whatever graphics, information, discount codes and testimonials you see necessary to make the sale. This is called pre-selling. You are proving to them that this product or service will fill their needs before they click on the link to go to the merchant's site and make the purchase.

Sure, creating a landing page involves setting up a website and adding good content (which is a considerable amount of work), but utilizing your own landing page has definite advantages. First of all, you can use this opportunity to capture visitor's contact information. Even if the user does not convert into a sale, you can still follow up with them in the future with related promotions. And the best part is, unlike a click, this marketing will cost you nothing!

Your power doesn't stop there. If you create your own landing page, you can also utilize Google's Website Optimizer to test various on screen elements. For instance, you can test whether a blue button or an orange button works better. You can also test whether or not a new headline increases conversions. Once again, with your landing page, you have much more control over the sales results. For these reasons, many people see the value in creating a landing page and prefer this method.

Link Directly To Merchants

With this form of monetization, you simply create a PPC advertisement. When people click on your ad, they are sent directly to the website of the merchant you are promoting. For instance, if you create an ad for the book “Dog Training 101” and link to the Barnes and Noble page featuring this book – that would be considered “direct linking.” You essentially are fronting the advertising costs for a company in the hopes that your affiliate commission outweighs the cost of the click.

Obviously, a major difference between the direct linking method and building your own landing page is just that; in this case you do not need a website filled with content and graphics. (You will still need to use a domain to send users to the merchant site through if you would like to track the traffic and conversions of the campaign.) What you do need, however, is a solid keyword list and some creative ad copy so you can begin your PPC campaign. Direct linking also proves to be a great way to test the potential profitability of an offer before you invest time and money building a landing page and website for it.

Another great benefit of linking directly to merchants is that users often feel comfortable making an online purchase when it comes from a brand or website they trust. That’s why sending a user directly to the company’s product page that fits their search works well. There is one problem with this method, however. As one of Google’s rules, they only allow one advertisement per URL to appear. This means that if another PPC marketer would like to send someone to the same site for the same phrase as you, only one ad will be displayed – which may very well *not* be yours.

The biggest downfall of choosing to direct link, however, is that you have no control over the sales process. That role falls on the merchant you are sending them to and if they don’t do well, you’re the only one who is out any money. On top of that, some merchants don’t allow you to directly link to their site to receive a commission.

Now that you understand the two basic ways in which you can monetize your PPC campaigns, let’s get one step closer to setting up your first PPC campaign by creating an AdWords account.

SET UP YOUR ADWORDS ACCOUNT

As I instructed you to do in the first week of this course, hopefully you have created a new Gmail account specifically for your Internet marketing endeavors. If you have done so, you are now ready to take the next step in setting up your AdWords advertising account.



First, head to <http://www.adwords.google.com> and click the “Start Now” button. When presented with the option to either create a Starter or Standard account, I suggest you choose the Standard Edition. (Come on – we’re serious about this PPC thing, right? ☺)

Next, you can enter your Gmail account information and select your currency. (I’m assuming most people will choose U.S. dollars.) Now, you must activate your Google AdWords account.

Head to your inbox and look for an email from Google instructing you on how to activate your account.

Hello,

We've noticed that you haven't started running your ads on Google. You're just minutes away from advertising to potential customers interested in what you offer. You can activate your account by following these steps:

1. Sign in to your account at <http://services.google.com/marketing/links/us-awalogin>.
2. Click the "Create your first campaign" button.
3. Create your ad campaign. We'll walk you through the whole process, step by step.
4. Click the "Continue to billing" button.
5. Submit your billing information.

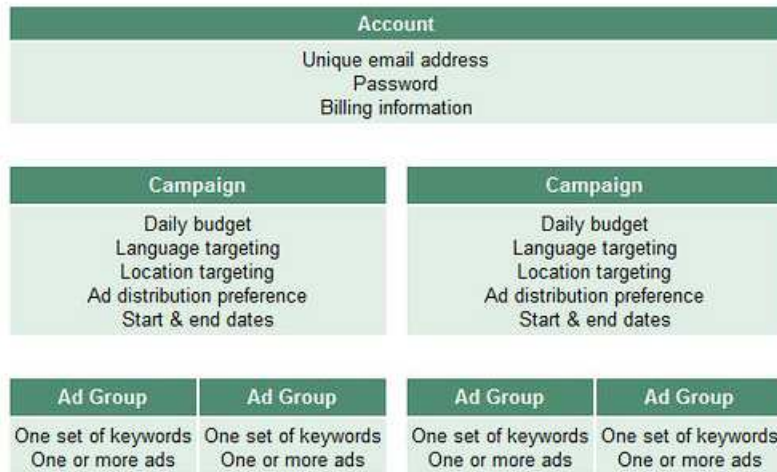
Follow the instructions and links within the email. Once you have activated your account, you will be given the option to either create you first campaign or access other parts of the AdWords interface including the AdWords Help Center.

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords interface for new advertisers. At the top, the Google AdWords logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Previous Interface', 'Announcements', 'Send feedback', 'Help', and 'Sign out' are on the right. Below the logo, a green navigation bar contains links for 'Home', 'Campaigns', 'Reporting', 'Tools', 'Billing', and 'My account'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled 'For new advertisers', features a large button 'Create your first campaign' and a 'Getting started' section with four numbered steps: 1. Choose your budget, 2. Create your ads, 3. Select keywords that match your ads to potential customers, and 4. Enter your billing information. A note below step 4 states: 'You will incur a one-time activation fee upon account creation.' The right column, titled 'Learn more', includes a 'Common questions' section with links to various topics like 'Where will my ads appear?' and 'How much does AdWords cost?'. It also has a 'Search help center' box and a link to 'Visit the AdWords Learning Center'. At the bottom of this column, there is a section 'Would you like extra help?' with two checked options: 'Send me personalized ideas for improving my advertising performance' and 'Send me AdWords newsletters with tips, surveys, and best practices'.

Congratulations! You are now ready to begin creating your pay-per-click campaigns.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ADWORDS

Before we start clicking away, loading keywords and writing ads, let's understand the basic structure of the AdWords advertising platform.



Now let's take a look around the AdWords interface and understand the basic settings that play major role in the success of your online campaigns.

Start by clicking the "Create A Campaign" button on the left hand side. Let's take a look at the Campaign Settings tab.

Campaign Settings

The screenshot shows the AdWords Campaign Settings interface. At the top, there are three tabs: "Campaign settings" (selected), "Create an ad", and "Add keywords". A "Hide bubbles" link is on the right. Below the tabs, there are three sections: "Ad" (with a placeholder "Your first ad will appear here"), "Budget: Not set" (with a "Default bid" link), and "Bids (Not set)" (with a "Not set" link). Below these sections, there are four tabs: "Settings" (selected), "Ads", "Keywords", and "Networks". The "Settings" tab is active, showing "Campaign settings" and "General" settings. The "General" settings include "Campaign name" (set to "Campaign #1") and "Audience" settings. The "Audience" settings include "Locations" (with a "Bundle: United States; Canada" selected) and "Languages" (with "English" selected). A "Demographic (advanced)" link is at the bottom.

Campaign Name: This is where you will name your campaign so you can differentiate it from other campaigns you create in the future.

Audience: Here is where you will select which areas you are going to target. For national campaigns, selecting either one of the first two options is a good choice. However, let's say you are promoting a local business. Simply select the country, state, metro area or city that pertains to the businesses location and where prospective customers are living. The more laser targeted your ads can be, the less they will cost you and the more effective they will be. Avoid making the mistake of selecting the whole country and blowing your budget if your ad or offering is affected by geographic locations.

Language: If your ads are for non-English speakers, you can change this setting here.

Networks, devices, and extensions

Networks and devices ?

☐ All available sites and devices

☒ Let me choose...

Search ☒ Google search

☒ Search partners (requires Google search)

Content ☒ Content network

☒ Relevant pages across the entire network

☐ Relevant pages only on the placements I manage

Devices ?

☒ Desktop and laptop computers

☒ iPhones and other mobile devices with full Internet browsers

Networks, devices and extensions: The default setting is set to "All available sites and devices." However, by selecting the "Let me choose..." option, you can distinguish whether or not you would like your advertisements to run on just the search engine results pages, just the Google content network, or both. If you are just starting out, I recommend creating a campaign for the Search Network and then creating a second campaign solely for the Content Network. Many people, including myself, have different ads, bidding and placement strategies for each of these networks. By setting up separate campaigns, you will be able to see the effectiveness of each one on its own.

Bidding and budget

Bidding option ?

Basic options | [Advanced options](#)

☐ Manual bidding for clicks

☒ Automatic bidding to try to maximize clicks for your target budget

☐ CPC bid limit: ? \$

Budget ?

\$ per day

Daily budget represents your average spend over the month; actual spend on a given day may vary.

☐ [Position preference, delivery method \(advanced\)](#)

Position preference **Off: Show ads in any position**

Automatic bidding campaigns may not use position preference

Delivery method **Standard: Show ads evenly over time**

Automatic bidding campaigns may not use accelerated delivery

Bidding Options: By selecting the Manual bidding for clicks option, you will have access to the advanced settings listed below including position preference (where you show up on the search engine results page), how quickly your ads are displayed and your bidding preference based on conversions and impressions. The default setting, however, is Automatic bidding to try to maximize clicks for your target budget. Here you specify the maximum CPC (or cost per click) you are willing to pay.

Budget: This is a DAILY BUDGET number. Not monthly. Not Yearly. DAILY. Set a number you feel comfortable with. Also be sure to adjust this daily budget for weekends or certain days of the week if those affect your business.

Advanced settings

☐ [Schedule: Start date, end date, ad scheduling](#)

Start date

End date ☒ None

Ad scheduling [?](#) **Show ads at all days and hours**
Unavailable until billing preferences are completed [?](#)

☐ [Ad delivery: Ad rotation, frequency capping](#)

Start date: These options are pretty self-explanatory. Here is where you will enter the day you would like the campaign to begin.

End date: And here is where you will enter a date for which you would like the campaign to end. Perhaps in the beginning, you will want to create an end date within a two to three days so you can take it easy and analyze the data you have collected for your campaign up until that point.

After you have filled out each of these areas under the Campaign Settings tab, let's create our first ad.

Writing Ads

Home Campaigns Reporting Tools Billing My account

All online campaigns <<

#1 Campaign

All online campaigns > #1 Campaign >

Ad group: Ad Group #1

Want more guidance during [Guide me step-by-step](#)

Name this ad group

Ad group name:

Create an ad

Headline

Description line 1

Description line 2

Display URL

Destination URL 1024 max

You can successfully write dozens of great PPC ads by creating tightly knit ad groups. For instance, you are better off creating 5 very specific ads for small, closely related keyword groups rather than a one-ad group with hundreds of keywords. You can then create a specific landing page for each of these ad groups as well. By doing so, you will:

- Receive a better CTR (click through rate)
- A higher Google Quality score (a measure of the relevance of your ad to your landing page)
- A lower cost per click as a result of the higher Quality score

As you write your advertising copy, be sure that you are creating ads that will increase your conversions – not click. There are so many ads that try to con people into going to their site. They promise “free” things or site features that don’t live up to the promise. Of course tactics like this will get you the click, but will it get you conversions? Remember, you are paying for EACH CLICK. Make sure those clicks count. Here are some other copywriting tips to keep in mind as you craft your ads:

- **DO NOT fit in.**
 - Many Internet marketers will do a search, see what others in the space are saying in their ads, and then either copy them or create extremely similar ads so that they “fit in”. Bad move. The only way your ad is going to stand out is if it DOESN’T look like others. Make it creative but related to the consumers needs. Don’t be surprised if some of your competitors start taking notice and begin copying you. ☺
- **Leverage special times of the year.**
 - Make your ad appear fresh and relevant by capitalizing on seasonal promotions. It works. Include a seasonal discount or a “holiday special”. Whether it’s Father’s Day, Flag Day or Christmas, make your ad relevant to what is going on *now* and you will see an increase in CTR and sales.
- **Use keywords in your ad copy.**
 - This tip may seem somewhat obvious but you wouldn’t believe how many people miss this point. If you are serving an ad for “red shoes”, put that phrase in your advertisement. Not only will it increase the ad’s relevancy, but the keyword text will also appear in bold.
- **Geo-target consumers in the copy.**
 - People respond very well to local providers, or at least companies that recognize their location. Not only can you geo-target users in your Campaign Settings area, but you can also personalize your ads by creating 50 ads and adding the state name inside each ad. Google and other search engines allow you to geo-target your PPC ads by state. This is another great way to increase your CTR and lower your advertising costs.

- **Capitalize Your Letters.**
 - When you enter your display URL, capitalize the first letter of each word in the URL. This method has been tested many times, and it is proven that capitalization of your URL can make a dramatic difference in the CTR of your ads.
- **Choose the correct URL.**
 - The display URL can end differently from the real URL as long as the first part of the website address is the same. For example, if the real website address is `http://ILoveShoeMoney.com`, then you're allowed to write the display URL as `http://ILoveShoeMoney.com/ShoeMoneyXCourse` to indicate relevancy to the user.

Keyword Research

After you write your ad copy, the next step is to create a keyword list. These are the terms you would like to trigger the display of your ad. Creating solid, creative and targeted keyword lists is one of the most important elements of developing a successful PPC campaign.

One of the biggest initial mistakes you could make with your first campaign is to simply compile a list of hundreds of keywords and then run your campaign. You will have a poor CTR, crappy traffic and will pay far too much for each click.

Instead, I suggest you begin by deciding which specific page or product you would like to promote. What URL do you want all of this valuable traffic heading to? Based on this answer, I recommend you simply open up a new Excel spreadsheet. Begin forming columns and grouping related keywords into smaller clusters. As you form your keyword lists, keep these points in mind:

- Be sure to remove any duplicates at this point because it will cause issues if you use the same keyword in more than one AdGroup.
- Avoid expensive, generic phrases and create extremely specific “long tail” phrases. (Examples of long tail phrases include something like “how to sew a baby blanket” or “2009 black Hummers for sale”.)
- Make sure that the keyword groups you create are relevant to the ad groups and the users’ intent.
- For your first few campaigns, do not put over 10 keywords into a group.

Once you have developed a list you feel comfortable with for your first campaign, place it into the Keywords section.

Keywords

☐ Select keywords

Enter one keyword per line.

<Enter new keyword>

Estimate search traffic

▼ **Advanced option: match types**

Use keyword match types to better target your ads:

- keyword = broad match
- "keyword" = match exact phrase
- [keyword] = match exact term only
- keyword = don't match this term

As your ads draw more traffic and you have more data to analyze, start to narrow down your keyword list by removing phrases that are extremely costly or convert poorly. You could also consider reducing your CPC for certain keywords or pausing them all together. Tightly knit keyword groups that are relevant to one another and to the ad being served will prove to be effective in your PPC efforts.

You may be thinking, “But wait, Shoe! What are these advanced options? What the heck is a match type?”

You’re right. I’ve shown you how to create a keyword list and organize it, but I have yet to explain to you the science of keyword match types and what they mean for your campaign. Let’s begin by defining each match type.

Broad Match: This means if your keyword is anywhere in the user’s search query, your ad will show. By using this matching option, your ad will receive the greatest number of impressions. On the other hand, it is likely that your ad will have a lower click through rate because it may not be relevant to the user’s search query.

Let me show you an example. Say that I’m selling computers. One of my keyword phrases is just that – computer. If I have this keyword set to broad match and someone searches for computer desk, my ad will still be triggered since the keyword was used in the user’s search. It will probably not receive a click through, however, since it is not that relevant. (Don’t forget, the better click through rate you have, the less you will pay per click.)

Match Exact Phrase: If you put “quotes” around your keyword phrases, you are signaling to the search engine that you only want your ad to appear if a user searches for that phrase in the same order. Since your keyword is much more targeted in this case, you will receive a fewer number of

impressions but will most likely receive a better CTR because it is so relevant to the user's search query.

Match Exact Term Only: If you put [brackets] around your keyword phrases, you are signaling to the search engine that you only want your ad to appear if a user searches for that *exact* phrase in the *exact order* – word for word – nothing more and nothing less. Exact match terms have the lowest impression rate, yet are inclined to have the highest click through rate.

Negative Keywords: You can also enter negative keywords into your keyword list. By entering a negative keyword, you are *preventing* your ad from being displayed in certain instances. For example, if I were still selling computers, I would probably use negative keywords like -free to avoid attracting people who are not looking to make a purchase. If someone searches for free computer – my ad will NOT be shown. As with your other keywords, you can use broad, phrase and exact matching for your negative keywords. If you are going to use broad match for a majority of your keywords, you will definitely need to make a list of negative keywords so you do not spend your advertising budget unwisely.

-Negative Broad Match: Type a minus symbol before the term (or combination of words). -example

-“Negative Phrase Match”: Type a minus symbol before the term and quotes at the beginning and end of any term (or combination of words). –“example”

-[Negative Exact Match]: Type a minus symbol before the term and square bracket at the beginning and end of any term (or combination of words). –[example]

Now that you have created your master list of amazing keywords, it is time to make sure that your landing pages are up to par (that is if you are not using the direct linking method).

Quality Score

So what is the Google Quality Score?

The Google Quality Score is a number that Google awards each advertiser. The score is developed based on the quality of your ads, the click through rate they receive, the quality of the landing page/website you send the user to and the overall value you provide to the user and the network. The higher your quality score, the lower advertising prices you will pay.

As I mentioned before, the Quality Score encourages advertisers to provide value, rewards them for doing so, and preserves the integrity and reputation of the search engine. If the results were flooded with garbage and spam, the search engine would lose its credibility and the ads would lose their effectiveness. Essentially, the whole advertising platform would crumble.



In order to generate your Quality Score, Google utilizes a combination of three methods:

- The Google Advertising Bot
- Your ad's historical performance
- Human review

So would you like to know more specifically the factors that Google uses to determine your quality score and how you can ensure you receive a high one? (Take these recommendations seriously as a poor initial quality score can result in *extremely high* CPC's and lower ad positions.)

How To Receive a High Quality Score:

- **Be relevant.** Make sure that you have accurate advertising copy. Your landing page also needs to repeat whatever your ad copy has promised. Also, make sure that your keywords are relevant to the ads in your ad group.
- **Entice clicks.** The higher the CTR (click-through rate) of your ad, the better score you will receive. Don't forget to write copy that encourages conversions, however, not just clicks.
- **Be real.** Don't come across a spammer with a one-page site. When Google sees a one-page site, they usually slap you with a low quality score since the value you are providing is lacking. (A good number of pages to aim for would be at least 10 to 15.) Google defines good value as relevant and original content, transparency, and navigability - so keep that in mind.
- **Customize pages.** Landing pages are most effective when they are laser targeted to a specific keyword phrase. This is why many successful PPC marketers develop duplicate landing pages for different advertisements. The landing pages, however, are optimized for specific keywords. In order to avoid receiving Google's penalty for duplicate content, you can implement 'no-index' and 'no-follow' tags to prevent the Google spider from visiting these pages and maintain your high quality score.
- **Get technical.** Besides creating great copy, relevant content and optimized campaigns don't forget to think about more technical aspects. For instance, if your domain name has your keywords in it, your score may be higher. Also, be sure to create a Google sitemap and implement your meta tags. Don't forget your Privacy Policy and About Us sections either. Include links to other sites as well.



Tracking Your Results

If you do not track your campaigns and analyze the results, how will you ever know if the money you are putting into PPC is money well spent? Luckily, plenty of tracking options exist which make the process for gathering data very easy for you. The hard part is looking at the stats and drawing conclusions about your campaign based on the figures.

So what exactly does “tracking” entail? Well, tracking is the process of putting a small piece of code into your ads, landing pages and thank you pages in order to record your visitors’ actions. Through tracking you can analyze the effectiveness of everything from individual keywords to multiple landing pages.

Essentially, good tracking equals more money...

- See where your money is best spent and where you are receiving positive ROI's.
- Discover what keywords, advertisements and campaigns produce the best results.
- Test new ad copy and landing pages instantly.
- Determine the cost of each visitor.
- Reveal any issues with campaign, landing pages and website.

Okay. So those are the obvious benefits of tracking your PPC efforts, but there are some definite mistakes you need to avoid in your tracking, including:

- **Confuse CTR with conversions.** Let's say that you are testing a bunch of ads, you have plenty of data on hand, and are ready to look at the numbers and decide which ads to remove from your campaign. If you were to look only at the CTR of an ad, that would be a mistake. One ad may have a high CTR but another ad may have a higher conversion rate. You'd definitely keep the second one!
- **Track only general stats.** If you are serious about being successful with PPC marketing, then you need to track and analyze every single keyword, ad and campaign you develop. (You can set variable likes `yourcompany.com/?keyword` to receive analytics for your campaigns.) By doing this, you will be able to remove crappy keywords and put more money into those that are producing results.

You may be saying, “Okay! I get it. I need to track my campaigns. But I don't know how to do it or where to begin.” Well, let's get started by looking at Google tracking. The process of implementing the tracking software is simple and efficient.

Setting up Google tracking is very simple and involves placing a small piece of code on the conversion page of your website or the website of the merchant. The conversion page is the page that confirms the particular action you want your visitors to do, such as the page that says 'thank you for purchasing X software' or 'thank you for signing up to my email list'.

Remember that tracking isn't restricted to sales. AdWords tracking lets you follow leads, signups, page views of an important page on your website, or you can specify another action particular to your business.

First, let's login to our Google AdWords account, click on the Tools tab, and select the Conversion Tracking tab. You will then arrive at this page.

[Home](#) [Campaigns](#) [Reporting](#) [Tools](#) [Billing](#) [My account](#)

Conversion Tracking

Increase your profits

- Increase your profits by using conversion tracking to make more lucrative advertising decisions
- Save time by using new tools that make it easier to achieve your desired ROI
- Best of all, it's FREE!

[Learn more](#) | [Setup Guide](#) | [Detailed Help](#)

1 Track your conversions

Conversion tracking will help you measure leads, sales, or other actions on your website. Use this information to make more profitable advertising decisions.

[Learn more](#)

2 Bid by action, not by click

Once you have created an action, you may be eligible to use the [Conversion Optimizer](#), a feature which can save time and money by helping to manage your advertising costs toward a maximum CPA goal.

3 Improve your ROI

Track which keywords and campaigns are contributing to your online marketing ROI, and adjust your bids and targeting accordingly.

[Learn more](#)

Create an action »

Click the Create an action button and determine the type of conversion or action you wish to track, whether this is a purchase or a acquiring an email address. If you would like, you can also give this action a dollar amount. I generally think of an email address as worth at least \$1 and each conversion is the commission you earn on a sale.

Create an Action

Define Action & Conversion Page > Insert Code

Define action

Name your action: This name will help you easily identify your action later.

For example: request info, widget sale confirmation

This action is used for tracking: ?

Revenue for your action:

(optional) ?

Provide an amount to track this action's value to you. This value is only for your reporting purposes and will not affect your campaigns in any way.

\$

Next, choose the language and security level of your site.

Describe page where action is completed

Provide details about the page where you will insert the action code, so we can format the code properly.

Conversion page language:

Conversion page security level:

Finally, customize your Google tracking indicator. This is the text that will appear on your site, as Google's policy is that the public and users should be aware of the fact that their actions are being tracked.

Customize tracking indicator

To maintain user trust and protect their privacy, you may want to consider telling users about your tracking methods through the 'Google Site Stats' text below and/or your privacy policy.

Choose text format: ☒ Google Site Stats - [learn more](#) ☐ Google Site Stats [learn more](#) ☐ None

Customize background color: # ☐ [Choose color](#)

Now you can copy the tracking code on the next page.


Create an Action

Define Action & Conversion Page > [Insert Code](#)

Add the tracking code to every page where a user reaches the action. [Insertion Tips](#)

1. Click in the box below to select all code, then copy your selection.
 - » Make sure to copy the code in its entirety. If you don't copy it all, conversions may not track correctly.
2. Paste the tracking code into the source code of your action page.
 - » Make sure to insert the code between the <body> and </body> tags. If you don't, conversions may not track correctly.

```
<!-- Google Code for test Conversion Page
-->
<script language="JavaScript"
type="text/javascript">
<!--
var google_conversion_id = 1044266200;
var google_conversion_language = "en_US";
var google_conversion_format = "1";
var google_conversion_color = "ffffff";
var google_conversion_label =
"DhPaCia2mQE2Pn48QM";
if (1.0) {
  var google_conversion_value = 1.0;
}
//-->
</script>
<script language="JavaScript"
src="http://www.googleadservices.com/pagead
/conversion.js">
```

 **Does someone else update your website code?**
Share this code with the person who does. They must update the code on your site, or conversions won't be tracked.
[Send action code](#)

Place this piece of code on the page that appears after your visitor has carried out your predetermined action. If you are trying to track sales, you will paste the code into the thank you page after a purchase has been made.

As you acquire more clicks, sales and data, you will be able to see figures for things such as costs, conversion rates and cost per conversions. You can then look at these stats on a microscopic keyword and ad group level. By clicking on the Reports tab, you will also be able to generate reports for elements of your campaign such as keyword performance, ad performance and overall campaign performance. Remember, track well and you'll earn more.

PPC THOUGHTS

Wow! So we've talked about general PPC concepts. I've also shown you how to set up your AdWords account, given you a tour of its features and even demonstrated the importance of tracking and how you can create your own reports. And the best part is... this is only the first half. Next week I will discuss more tracking options, show you a multitude of online tools to help you quickly create campaigns and even how to create and optimize your own landing page.

But before we move any further, there are a few points I want to make sure you think about before spending a dime on pay-per-click.

- First, you should learn the fundamentals and then be willing to learn from your mistakes.
- Completely understand the potential costs before you make the leap into PPC.
- Then, determine how much you can afford to spend daily, weekly and monthly and then set a daily budget. Do not create a mountain of debt and have nothing to show for it.
- Understand when to say when for your campaigns. Don't run an unprofitable campaign because of your ego. Know when to move onto your next project.

PPC TERMINOLOGY REVIEW

Here is a list of terms you will see most often when researching the paid search business model:

Affiliate Arbitrage - Another way of referring to using paid search to promote affiliate products. It refers to the act of buying an ad for a relatively cheap keyword to generate a sale for a much higher profit.

Click Through - When a visitor clicks a link. It may be a click on your affiliate link, or it may be a click on the display URL in your paid search ad.

CTR (Click Through Rate) - A percentage representing the number of clicks divided by the number of impressions (each time your ad appears) of your ads.

Commission - The percent or amount you are paid by a merchant for a sale, click, etc.

Content - Articles and information displayed on your site to help make the sale.

Cookie - A small script used by the merchant to identify a visitor as "yours," and to track how much time has elapsed between the visitor's first visit and the sale.

Display URL - The URL that people see in your paid search ads. This isn't necessarily the same URL to which you're sending visitors, but what is displayed in your ad.

Destination URL - The URL on which a web visitor lands when clicking on the Display URL (see above).

Impression - An impression occurs when your ad appears on a page. In paid search, impressions can help you determine the effectiveness of your ad copy by formulating your click through rate (see above).

Landing Page URL - The URL for a specific web page on your website, where a searcher lands after clicking on the Display URL in your ad. The landing page is usually built around a specific keyword with information about the specific product you are promoting.

Redirect URL - A destination URL on your own domain, coded so you can track the activity of web visitors who click on it.

Pre-Sales (Pre-Selling) - Providing a visitor with information that helps them make an informed decision about buying the product you are promoting. Pre-sales content inspires the visitor to click your link to go to the merchant's site.

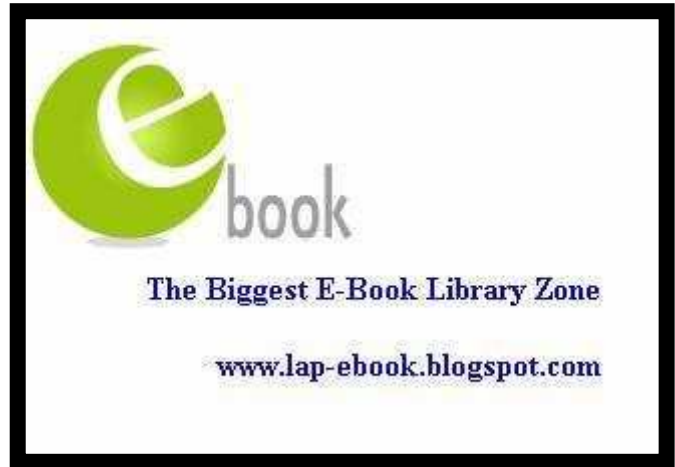
ROI (Return on Investment) - Amount the affiliate makes after expenses are deducted, usually expressed as a dollar amount. A simple formula for ROI is $\% = \text{Profit} / \text{Ad Spend} \times 100$. Most paid search affiliates make a minimum of 100% ROI the goal for all their campaigns.

SHOEMONEY ACTION PLAN: WEEK 4

In order to be prepared for next week's course about pay per click marketing, it is highly recommended that you complete each of the action steps listed here.

- ☐ Understand the basic concepts of PPC and become familiar with the terminology listed at the end of this guide.
- ☐ Determine whether or not PPC will fit your business model and your personality type. If so, complete the remaining tasks listed here.
- ☐ Be honest with yourself and determine if you have enough funds to invest in your PPC efforts properly. Are you willing to lose some of this money on your first few campaigns?
- ☐ Decide which monetization method you think will work better for you at this point – creating your own landing page or directly linking to merchants?
- ☐ Setup and activate your Google AdWords account (or the account for any other advertising program/search engine you may wish to use).
- ☐ Browse the Google AdWords *Campaign Settings* tab and become familiar with all of the various features and options available to you.
- ☐ Do a search for the niche you are looking to enter. What do the advertisements for your competitors look like? Now create 3 unique, creative ads that you believe would be relevant to your future site. Are they better than your competitors?
- ☐ Take your keyword list that you developed last week and open up an Excel spreadsheet. Now group these words into smaller categories with a maximum of ten keywords in each group. Make sure they are all closely related to one another.
- ☐ Once you have made a targeted 10-keyword list, become familiar with the keyword matching options – broad, exact phrase and exact match. Also become familiar with negative keywords as well. Adjust and add to your keyword list as you see fit based on these matching options.
- ☐ Understand the importance of Google's Quality Score and look back to see if your first advertisement and set of keywords are relevant to one another.
- ☐ Head to the Tracking tab and create a sample tracking code. You will see how easy it is to create numerous conversion tracking codes and reports.
- ☐ Finally, go to the Reporting tab of your Google AdWords account and explore all of the different types of reports you will be able to generate once your campaign is up and running.

SHOEMONEY BONUS: If you are interested in using the ShoeMoney Tools at any point during this course, head to <https://tools.shoemoney.com> and use the promo code XCOURSE. You will receive a 14-day trial for only \$1.95. (You can cancel anytime!)



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